



**ARTICLES AND PREPOSITIONS IN THE ENGLISH  
WRITING OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT  
AMU - AN ERROR ANALYSIS**

**THESIS**  
SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

**Doctor of Philosophy**

IN  
**ENGLISH**

BY

**FARHANA FAROOQI**

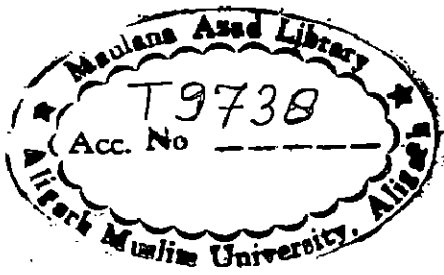
UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF  
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**2015**



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*Dedicated*  
*to*  
*My (Late) Parents*



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**  
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**Certificate**

This is to certify that **Ms. Farhana Farooqi**, bearing Enrolment No. GB-5857, in the Department of English of this University has fulfilled the requirements prescribed for the Ph.D. degree of the Aligarh Muslim University.

The thesis entitled, "**Articles and Prepositions in the English Writing of Undergraduate Students at AMU – An Error Analysis**" has been carried out under my supervision. I find it suitable for submission for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English (ELT).

*ds/12.05.201.*  
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## **Candidate's Declaration**

I, **Farhana Farooqi**, hereby declare that I have personally carried out the work presented in the thesis entitled, **“Articles and Prepositions in the English Writing of Undergraduate Students at AMU – An Error Analysis”**. It is an independent and original piece of research work. No part of the thesis has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma prior to this date. I consider myself solely responsible for any error, if found, in this thesis.

Date: 15/5/15

*Farhana Farooqi*  
**Farhana Farooqi**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AmE	American English
AMU	Aligarh Muslim University
Arts.	Articles
BrE	British English
CA	Contrastive Analysis
EA	Error Analysis
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
FLLs	Foreign Language Learners
IL	Interlanguage
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MT	Mother Tongue
MTI	Mother Tongue Interference
NL	Native Language
NP	Noun Phrase
NS	Native Speaker
NSs	Native Speakers
Preps.	Prepositions
SE	Standard English
SL	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLLs'	Second Language Learners'
SSL	Second Language Learning
SVO	Subject – Verb – Object
TL	Target Language
UG	Undergraduate

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## DEFINITION OF DIFFICULT TERMS

**Approximative system:** The deviant linguistic system which the learner employs when trying to use the TL.

**Asterisk (\*):** Designates an unacceptable word or sentence. This is placed before the word or sentence which is supposed to be incorrect.

**Developmental Error:** Errors which do not drive from transfer of another language and they reflect the learner's competence at a particular stage and illustrate some of the general characteristics of language acquisition.

**Error:** The use of a linguistic item in a way which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete learning.

**Error Analysis:** The study and analysis of errors made by second language learners.

**Fossilization:** A process which sometimes occurs in which incorrect linguistic features become a permanent part of the way a person speaks or writes a language.

**Interference:** The use of a native- language pattern or rule which leads to an error or inappropriate form in the target language.

**Interlanguage:** The systematic knowledge of a second language which is independent of both the learner's first language and the TL.

**Interlingual Error:** An error which results from language transfer, that is, which is caused by the learner's native language.

**Intralingual Error:** An error which results from faulty or partial learning of the target language, rather than from language transfer.

**Language Transfer:** The process of using knowledge of the first language in learning a second language.

**Mistake:** A learner when speaking or writing may make a mistake as a result of lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or some other aspect of performance.

**Negative Transfer:** Also known as interference is the use of a negative – language pattern or rule which leads to an error or inappropriate form in the target language.

**Positive Transfer:** It is the transfer which makes learning a second language easier and may occur when both the native and target language share the same form.

**Second Language Acquisition:** The acquisition of another language after having acquired the basis of the first.

**Simplification:** The way in which learners seek to ease the burden of learning or using a second language by controlling the number of hypotheses they try to form at any one stage of development, by omitting grammatical and/ or propositional elements in production.

**Transitional Competence:** Interim rule systems that learners develop in the process of SLA.



# *Chapter-1*

## *Introduction to the Study*

## 1.1 Background of the Study

English is the world's most widely used language as it is spoken all over the world. It has therefore been referred to as "global language" of the modern era. According to Pholthee (2008, p.1), English is spoken today as a first language by 320 – 370 million people. It is also used as a second language by about the same number of people. Crystal (1988, p. 6-7) also maintains that there are over 700 million English users, of whom more than 300 million are native speakers. Crystal comments:

*English has become the dominant language of world communication. Textbooks on English these days regularly rehearse the litany of its achievements. It is the main language of the world's books, newspapers and advertising. It is the official international language of airports and air traffic control. It is the chief maritime language. It is the language of international business and academic conferences, of diplomacy, of sport. Over two-thirds of the world's scientists write in English. Three-quarters of the world's mail is written in English. Eighty per cent of all the information stored in the electronic retrieval systems of the world is stored in English. . . . Statistics of this kind . . . make the point that it is not the number of mother-tongue speakers which makes a language important in the eyes of the world . . . but the extent to which a language is found useful outside its original setting (cited by Davis 1989, pp. 455)*

English in India is regarded as a second language. After Hindi it is the most commonly used in India. It is used in education, business, government and broadcasting and is taught in schools or colleges as a second language in India.

Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) is one of the most prestigious universities in India owing to its academic excellence. It is an institution which accommodates a heterogeneous group of students in its classrooms. The term 'heterogeneous' refers to a group of students who belong to different linguistic, social, cultural, economic and educational backgrounds. In this university, English is taught as a second language

and it has been introduced from primary standard and is taught as a compulsory subject up to the undergraduate level. Students at undergraduate level are fully familiar with the importance of English in the recent scenario. However, most of the students are not only unintelligible in their English speech but also are incompetent in their writing skills. English articles and prepositions are the main areas of difficulty which affect their writings as the following sentences suggest:

The sentences given below have been taken from the compositions of undergraduate students studying English as a second language at AMU. These sentences (section 'a' & 'b') are obvious instances of difficulties in using English articles and prepositions encountered by learners of English.

- a) "The Aligarh Muslim University placed at the Aligarh. The Aligarh Muslim University is the very famous in the India. The location of the Aligarh Muslim University is third in the India" (see full script in appendix V-A)
- b) ... "I entered in the University from Bob- e syed . . . , I was riding my bicycle very slowly because I was looking buildings of the AMU. . . I reached to the Polytechnic . . . I parked my bicycle in the cycle stand . . . I reached to the civil section . . . , my first period/class on that day was of Applied mathematics in the class LT-42. I reached at my classroom" (see full script in appendix V-A)

Keeping in view the above mentioned problem, an attempt has been made to analyze the difficulties that make these learners incompetent users of English; and subsequently, various teaching strategies and graded activities are suggested and designed in order to improve writing skills of these students.

## **1.2 Aim and Scope of the Study**

The present study aims at analyzing errors found in the use of articles and prepositions by undergraduate (UG) students at AMU. On the basis of its findings, it will suggest important implications and recommendations for teaching and learning these components of English grammar. It was observed that many students at AMU

have difficulty in writing skills in various contexts. Their writing was marked by many grammatical mistakes, like linking devices, cohesion and coherence, auxiliary verbs, plural markers, subject-verb-concord, organizations, capitalizations, punctuations, tense markers and the lack of competence in using articles and prepositions. However, this study focuses on the erroneous use of articles and prepositions only.

The motivation for the present research emerged from an experiment by the researcher who was assigned to take UG classes for practice teaching. The researcher was assigned to take compulsory English B.SC Second year (Zoology main) classes. Word formation process and conjunctions were chosen for teaching vocabulary and grammar. A test was designed to examine the students' knowledge about the aforementioned area and it was given to the students as a class assignment. In the test, verbal inputs were also given to help them. They were asked to do the task in 15 minutes and a word limit of 150 was set. While evaluating their performance, many grammatical errors were found. The students' composition lacked linking devices, cohesion and coherence, tense composition, auxiliary verbs, plural markers and correct application of articles and prepositions. Some of such samples can be seen in appendix V-A. It has also been observed that the learners do not get perfect command or proficiency even though they devote more than ten years to this in their schooling. This happens because neither teachers are able to look at the language development in students nor do learners devote sufficient time to learning English. They spend only a few hours in a week along with a lot of other assignments. In India, teaching methods and procedures may also be blamed which are not effective in achieving the desired goals.

### **1.3 Statement of Problem**

Articles (*a/an, the*) and prepositions (*at, by, to, in, for, from, of, on, etc.*) are the most important elements in English grammar. The wrong selection of such aspects may cause failure in getting the learners' intended meaning or make their linguistic production, spoken or written, ambiguous. Many teachers as well as researchers find

that these aspects of grammar are difficult to learn and teach. Regarding articles, Jarvis (1999) & Myers (1992) state that learners from L1 background without an article system, such as Korean, Russian, Japanese, and Chinese find the acquisition of English article system more difficult in comparison to those who have an article system in their first language (cited in Hawkins 2009, p.88). Even those who have articles or article-like morphemes which are used in ways that differ from English articles (e.g. French, Spanish, Persian, Scandinavian languages, and the Semitic languages), find it difficult to use English articles properly (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman 1999, p. 271). In this relation, Master (2002) claims that the difficulty in acquiring article system emerges from three facts:

- *The articles, which include the words a, an, the, and Ø, the invisible zero/null article, are among the most frequently occurring function words in the language (Master, 1997), making continuous conscious rule application difficult over an extended stretch of discourse;*
- *Function words are normally unstressed and consequently very difficult if not impossible for a NNS to discern, thus affecting the availability of input in the spoken mode; and*
- *The article system stacks multiple functions onto a single morpheme, a considerable burden for the learner, who generally looks for a one-form-one-function correspondence in navigating the labyrinth of any human language until the advanced stages of acquisition (p. 331-32).*

Similarly, the learning of prepositions in English is also a challenging task for ESL/EFL learners. In this connection, Celce-Murcia & Larsen Freeman (1999) believe that: *“prepositions are also notoriously difficult to learn. Long after ESL/EFL students have achieved a high level of proficiency in English, they still struggle with prepositions”* (p. 401). There are many reasons for this challenge: First, prepositions are small words that never change in form and are pronounced softly, as they occur in unstressed syllables, and are also not written in capital letters in book titles. Secondly, prepositions are conceptually different from one language

to another in the sense that prepositions come before the noun in English but in some languages they come after and thus making them postpositions. Some languages complete the role of prepositions through the use of inflections. As a result, prepositions do not behave grammatically in the same manner. Also, another problem with English prepositions may be expressed in terms of meaning when the same meaning is expressed by making use of different prepositions in ESL/EFL language. For example, in English we say “go to work *by car*,” whereas in Albanian, it is said we go to work with a car (*shkojnë punë me makinë*). Both sentences express the same meaning by making use of different prepositions. Therefore, there is a mismatch problem between English and other languages (cited by Deliji, & Koruti 2013, p.125).

The most problematic fact is that, English prepositions are polysemous in nature. They hold multiple meanings under different circumstances and contexts because of which they cause difficulties in comprehension. Many extensive studies done by linguists/scholars from the past to present have proved this as a challenging task. As stated by Swan (1998):

*It is difficult to learn to use prepositions correctly in a foreign language. Most English prepositions have several different functions (for instance, one well-known dictionary lists eighteen main uses of at), and these may correspond to several different preposition in another language. At the same time, different preposition can have very similar uses (in the morning, on Monday morning, at night) ..... ” (quoted by Arjan, Hayati, Abdullah, & Roslim 2013, p. 168).*

Finally, the explanation of prepositions provided by school books/ text books also create problems for the ESL/EFL learners or teachers because most of the English textbooks provide just a simple explanation of the prepositions followed by one or two example. On the basis of the above facts, the present investigation attempts to focus on the difficulties faced by the ESL undergraduate students at AMU in their use of articles and prepositions. This was done by employing a written quiz to them.

It is observed that a great majority of participants of the present research committed numerous errors in the use of mentioned components of English grammar. These language learners were expected to be linguistically proficient but it was found that the learners from both rural and urban areas, who started learning English at least ten years prior to their admission in this university and were in the age group of 19-20, did not have command over the use of English articles and prepositions and so their proficiency level in English remains low. This is what the current study has observed in this investigation. The errors made by these participants reveal that the functions and the usage of English articles and prepositions are troublesome areas for most students irrespective of their state of proficiency in the English language. Three distinct error tendencies with regard to the employment of articles and prepositions have been observed in this research. Among them are incorrect use, redundant use, and omission of articles and prepositions.

On the basis of the findings and consequences of the study, some important implications and recommendations along with graded activities are devised and designed in order to eliminate the errors of articles and prepositions from the writings of ESL students at AMU.

#### **1.4 Objective of the Study**

The main objectives of the present study are as follows:

- a) To find out common error tendencies occurring in the use of English articles and prepositions;
- b) To quantify the frequencies of these errors (to what extent errors occur);
- c) To analyze the identified errors in the use of English articles and prepositions;
- d) To describe the possible causes and sources of errors found in the use of articles and prepositions;

- e) To recommend strategies and design graded activities in order to improve the knowledge of articles and prepositions of the target group of this research.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

It has been observed that the functions and uses of articles and prepositions attracted the attention of the researchers. Several studies like that of Lightbrown and Spada (2000, p.176-192) as cited by Mangungu (2010, p.16) argue that when errors are persistent, especially when they are shared by almost all students in a class, it is important for teachers to bring the problem to the students' attention. Kroll and Schafer (1978) claim that EA can be used to improve writing skills and may guide teachers in assessing learners to become better writers (p. 242-248). Corder (1974) in this regard, suggests that: "*we should be aware that different types of written material may produce a different distribution of error or a different set of error types*" (p. 126). EA helps the teachers to identify the specific and common language problems of students in a systematic manner, so that they can focus more attention to these types of errors. Error analysis, as a mechanism, plays a significant role in improving writing skills (ibid).

By analyzing these two important aspects of English grammar, this study attempts to anticipate major difficulties that ESL learners face when learning English (exclusively the identification of learners' difficulties in the use of English articles and prepositions). It also shows the frequency of occurrence of errors in the areas of grammar undertaken for review. The problems that are traceable in some sources can be attributed to mother tongue interference of the learners as well as their L2 including developmental sources of errors. Besides, identification of errors, the study also provides the possible explanations of the learners' errors and makes some possible recommendations as the solution to these difficulties. Therefore, another significance of the present study is to inform educators and material developers about the kind of errors that the participants of this study made. If educators and study material developers become conscious of the likely problematic areas that



these learners face, they would be in a better position to put appropriate intervention strategies into place.

Another significance of this research is that it is a serious attempt to develop a better understanding of such difficulties that L2 learners encounter regularly. It is embedded in its findings which gives forceful remarks into nature of participants' obstruction related to the English learning process.

Finally, the consequences of this research might be helpful to the people who are interested in the field of ESL/EFL learning to get a better comprehension of second language acquisition or learning process.

## **1.6 Method Adopted**

In order to achieve the goals of this study, a questionnaire consisting of multiple choice questions was developed to be filled in by the sample of this research. A questionnaire can be defined as an instrument in which the respondents provide responses to the questions or mark items that indicate their responses. The method and procedure for this analytic study has been adopted from Corder's (1974) error analysis model which is as follows: classification, quantification, presentation and analysis and explanation of errors. SPSS 20.0 Software was used to obtain frequencies and percentage of the errors. The findings of the data are presented in tabular and graphical mode. The data is then interpreted on the basis of the findings or results. Based on the interpretations of the obtained result, various activities and strategies are suggested and designed with diagrams for developing the learners' proficiency in the use of English articles and prepositions.

## **1.7 Plan of Study**

The present thesis is divided into six chapters. They are as follows:

*Chapter One* has introduced the topic of the study and has pointed out reasons for conducting this investigation in terms of what, why and how this research is undertaken.

*Chapter Two* forms the theoretical background of this research. It deals with the available literature with a view to describe and explain the review of related theory of the study. The chapter is divided into three sections which are as follows:

1. Error analysis (EA): it deals with a description of errors in terms of the definition, orientation, basic underlying assumptions, types and sources of errors, significance of learners' errors, weaknesses of error analysis method, and a brief account of second language acquisition (SLA);
2. English articles: It takes into account the description of articles in terms of definition, meaning, types and functions;
3. The last section of this chapter provides the description of English prepositions in the light of its definition, types, functions, meanings, and uses in terms of prepositions of time, place, and motion.

*Chapter Three* deals with the research methodology adopted for the study with an illustration of various available methodologies.

*Chapter Four* presents analysis of the obtained data. It is devoted to analyze the errors committed by participants of the study. The data comprises respondents' performance errors in the use of English articles and prepositions. The analysis of data is followed by the explanation and plausible interpretation of errors.

*Chapter Five* discusses the findings of the results obtained from the analysis of data. The findings have been described for each section of the questionnaire.

*Chapter Six* discusses on the basis of findings of the errors, some important implications, recommendations, and suggestions have been devised and designed with suitable figures and diagrams.

*Reference Section* is made up of five appendices. In appendix I, suggested activities for articles have been presented. Appendix II presents suggested activities for prepositions. In appendix III, a bibliographical presentation can be seen. In appendix

IV, survey questionnaire is given. Appendix V-A enlist a collection of original writing samples and V-B shows sentences containing errors which have been used for analysis and interpretation of data in this research.

*Chapter-2*

*Review of Related  
Literature*

## 2. Introduction of the Chapter

This chapter forms the theoretical background of research. The review of literature is divided into the following three sections:

- Error Analysis (EA)
- Description of English Articles
- Description of English Prepositions

### 2.1 An Overview on Error Analysis

This section attempts to give a detail description on errors analysis in terms of its definition, orientation, underlying assumptions and the factors that affect L2 learners' linguistic systems. It also defines errors and its related terms. Further, it highlights types and sources of errors, significance of learners' errors, and weaknesses of error analysis method. The section ends with a brief account of second language acquisition (SLA).

#### 2.1.1 What is Error Analysis?

Error analysis (EA) is a branch of applied linguistics. It is a type of analysis that focuses on the *errors* that learners make. Richards, Platt and Platt (1985) define EA as, the study and analysis of the *errors* made by second language learners, carried out in order to:

1. Identify strategies which learners use in language learning;
2. Identify the causes of learners' errors; and
3. Obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid to teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials (Richards, et al. 1985, p. 127).

According to Richards, (1971) "*the field of EA may be defined as dealing with the differences between the ways people leaning a language speak, and the way adult native speakers of the language use the language*"(p. 3).

Corder (1974) contributed to EA enormously and states:

*The study of error is part of the investigation of the process of language learning. In this respect it resembles methodologically the study of the acquisition of the mother tongue. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and may give us indications as to the learning strategies (p. 125).*

According to Sridhar (1976, p.270), EA is a pedagogical tool which is based on three arguments:

- i) EA does not suffer from the limitation of CA restriction to errors caused by interlingual transfer: EA brings to light many other types of errors frequently made by learners, for instance, *intralingual* errors such as over-generalization, ignorance of rules restrictions, incomplete application of rules, false concepts hypothesized, faulty teaching method, and learning strategy used, etc.
- ii) EA provides data on actual , attested problems and not hypothetical problems and therefore, forms a more efficient and economical basis for designing pedagogical strategies,
- iii) EA is not confronted with the complex theoretical problems encountered by CA.

Thus, EA is a study of observing, identifying, classifying, describing and explaining learners' errors systematically by using any of the principles and techniques provided by linguistics.

### **2.1.2 Orientation of Error Analysis**

Contrastive analysis (CA) could not prove to be a valuable prediction technique in finding out the difficulties faced by L2 learners. The errors predicted by CA do not always occur while, those not predicted sometimes do. Philosophers observed that not all errors can be attributed to the interference of a pattern of L1 in the acquisition of L2 and stresses that errors are also attributable to sources of difficulty within L2 (intra-lingual errors). Khalil (1985) differentiates between CA and EA in the following ways:

*One of the main arguments in favor of error analysis in general has been that, unlike contrastive analysis, error analysis deals with the actual errors that are made by the language learner. Thus, error analysis is based on empirical data and permits a realistic, as opposed to probabilistic, analysis of errors (p. 337).*

EA came into existence with Corder's seminal (1967) paper *the significance of learners' errors* which emphasized the learner's positive cognitive contribution to learning and viewed that the learner is engaged in a process of discovering the language. It claimed that the learner forms hypotheses based on language input and tests those hypotheses in speech production. In this perspective, errors are not only an inevitable but also a necessary feature of learner's language, without which improvement cannot occur. Corder proposed the term *transitional competence* to indicate systematicity and variability involved in learner's language system. A learner's errors, according to Corder (1967), represent the intermediate system between the transitional competence of that learner and the target language.

As mentioned by Littlewood (1984, p. 22), errors were considered as signs of learning failure and were not supposed to be tolerated till the 1960s. Later, a new developed notion claimed that second language learners should be viewed as actively constructing rules from the data they encounter and gradually adapting these in the direction of the target language (TL) system. According to this new view, learner's errors should not be seen as signs of failure. They must be perceived as the clearest evidences for the learner's developing systems which can offer the investigators insights to enable them to process the data of learner's language. Littlewood further claims that CA seems to be limited in its power to predict errors. L2 learners' constructed incorrect hypothesis would not be expected due to L1 interference. But many of their incorrect notions are expected from the TL itself. This is the fact that EA reveals and so, CA is replaced by error analysis.

Corder (1981) supposes EA as an experimental technique. In this connection, he claims:

*Error analysis confirms or disproves the predictions of theory lying behind bilingual comparison. In this sense EA is an experimental*

*technique for validating the theory of transfer. But EA goes beyond this; it aims at telling us something about the psycholinguistic processes of language learning. We hope to be able to draw certain conclusions about the strategies adopted by the learner in the process of learning. In this sense EA is part of the methodology of psycholinguistic investigation of language learning (p. 35).*

According to Kroll and Schafer (1978), EA, the most recent approach in ESL has moved further toward the process side of the spectrum. According to them, error analyst are cognitivists, not behaviorists, in their psychological orientation. They regard errors in the speech and writing of foreign students learning English in much the same way that French regarded the slips of the tongue, or that Kenneth Goodman views "misuse" in reading "as windows into the mind." Thus, the errors help the teacher identify the cognitive strategies that the learner adopting in the process of learning (p.242-243).

Corder (1981, p. 45) identifies two major functions or objectives of EA. One of them is theoretical and the other is practical.

- i) The theoretical area of EA has its place in methodology. It describes the learner's knowledge of the target language. It helps the researcher find out the nature of the psychological processes and the relation between the knowledge and the teaching the learner has been receiving.
- ii) The practical area of EA is the function of all that knowledge in remedial action to overcome the mismatch between the knowledge of the learner and the demands of the situation. Furthermore, Corder (1981) explains that mismatch is a problem of diagnosis because the degree of mismatch is a quantitative assessment whereas the nature of mismatch is a qualitative assessment. It involves the study of the nature of the learner's knowledge of the language (p. 47).

Ellis (1994) points out that the study of errors is carried out by means of EA. In the 1970s EA supplanted CA, which sought to predict the errors that learners make by identifying the linguistic differences between their L1 and the TL. The underlying assumption of CA was that errors occurred primarily as a result of interference,



when the learner transferred his NL “habits” into the L2. Interference was believed to take place whenever the “habits” of the NL differed from those the TL. CA gave the way to EA as this assumption came to be challenged, whereas, CA looked at only the learners NL and TL, (i.e. fully - formed languages). EA provide a methodology for investigating learner language. For this reason, EA constitutes an appropriate starting point for the study of the learner language and L2 acquisition. According to Ellis, EA, constituted the first serious attempt to investigate learner language in order to discover how learners acquire an L2. EA has made substantial contribution to SLA research. It served as a tool for providing empirical evidence for behaviorist/ mentalist debates of the 1970s, showing that many of the errors that learners make cannot be down to interference. It helped, therefore, to support the claims made by Dulay and Burt, and others regarding the ‘creativity’ of much learner language.

In this way, EA looks at the language acquisition process by examining possible strategies that language learners employ in attempt to make sense of their L2. Corder maintains that learners' errors can provide valuable evidence of the language learning process by systematically examining and classifying these errors. There searchers or teachers can infer the strategies used by language learners. Corder (1974) identifies three major stages in the process of EA, recognition, description and explanation. These are logically dependent upon each other.

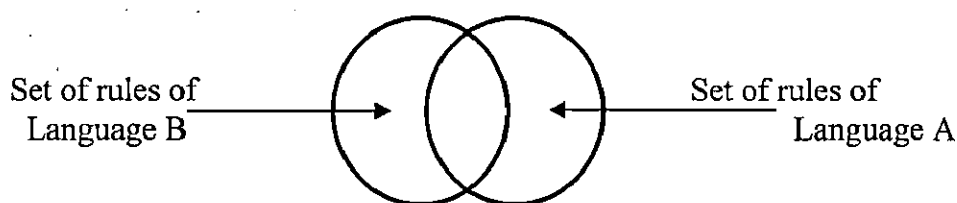
### **2.1.3 Underlying Assumptions of Error Analysis**

Corder (1975) maintains that an L2 learner creates a language system for himself in the acquisition process of target language (TL).It has structural properties which can be described in the sense that it is rule-governed and the nature of the rules used can be inferred. His/her language clearly is neither his mother tongue (MT) nor the TL, but shares some properties of these two languages. The learner’s language develops all the time has been given a number of names, for example, Corder (1971) proposed the term “idiosyncratic dialect”, Nemser (1971) called it “approximative system” and Selinker (1969, 1972) refers to it as “Interlanguage”. Ellis (1986) states that these terms reflect two related but different concepts. First, interlanguage refers to the structured system which the learner constructs at any given stage in his

development (i.e. *an interlanguage*). Second, the term refers to the series of interlocking systems which form 'built-in syllabus' (i.e. the *interlanguage continuum*) (p. 47). A brief discussion on all the three terms is described below:

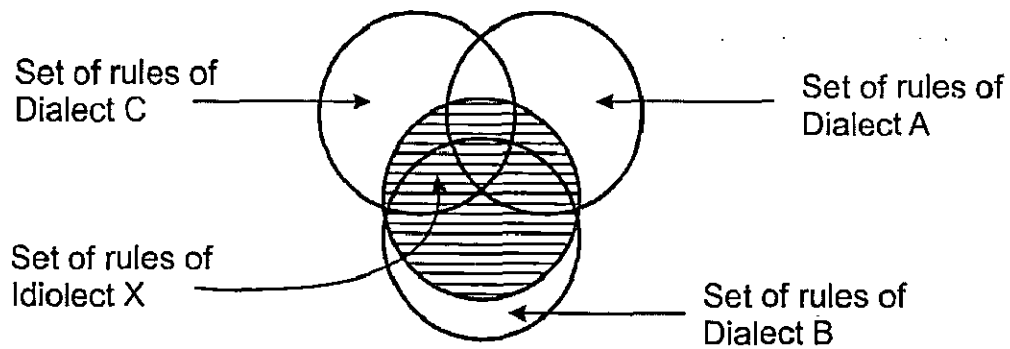
### 2.1.3.1 Idiosyncratic Dialect

Corder (1971) introduced the term "idiosyncratic dialect" (ID) in his paper entitled: "Idiosyncratic Dialect and Error Analysis". In this paper, he assumed that the L2 learner has a motive to bring his language performance more into line with conventions of those of the TL speakers as much as he can. Corder regards the L2 learners' language as a peculiar dialect of the TL; different from it in many respects and probably sharing some features of his/her MT. Corder considers the learners' language as a dialect linguistically: two languages which share some rules of grammar are dialects (Corder 1971 in Richards 1974, p. 158).



**Fig. 2.1: Language A and B in a Dialect relation**

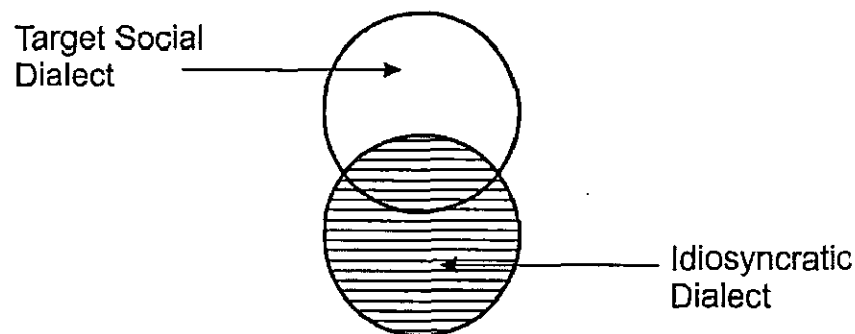
According to Corder, the idiosyncratic dialect of the learner of a second language is regular, systematic and meaningful. It has a grammar which can be described in terms of a set of rules, some sub-sets of which are a sub-set of the rules of target social dialect. Corder makes distinction between dialects and idiosyncratic dialects. According to him, dialects are the languages of a social group i.e. (*social dialects*) while idiosyncratic dialects are not the languages of a social groups. According to Corder, there is a justification for calling the idiosyncratic dialects the linguistic one and not the social one. Corder also distinguishes between *idiolects* and *idiosyncratic dialect*. According to him, an *idiolect* is a personal dialect which linguistically has the characteristics found somewhere in the set of rules of one or another social dialect. He further adds that, an *idiolect* is some sort of a mixture of dialects. This concept of Corder can be demonstrated in figure as follow:



**Fig. 2.2: Idiolect 'X'**

(cited in Richards 1974, p. 159).

Thus, according to figure 2.2, it can be said that rules of idiolect 'x' are drawn from three overlapping social dialect but it does not process any rules which are rules of any of these dialects. If all these social dialects are included in a language (D) then idiolect 'x' is a dialect of language (D) conventionally. This state of affairs differ in the case of idiosyncratic dialects where the rules required to account for the dialect are not members of the set of rules of any social dialect. They are peculiar to the language of that speaker. Figure 2.3 demonstrates the above statements.



**Fig. 2.3: Idiosyncratic Dialect**

According to Corder, all idiosyncratic dialects have this characteristic in common that some of the rules required to account for them are peculiar to an individual. Consequently, some of their utterances are not easily interpretable as its interpretation depends on the knowledge of the conventions underlying that utterance. One of the natural features of idiosyncratic dialects is that they are normally unstable. Corder attributes this instability to the reason that the object of any speech is to communicate, i.e. to be understood. If understanding is only partial, then a speaker has a motive to bring his behavior into line with conventions of some

social group, if he is able. This instability creates problems for linguists to describe idiosyncratic dialects (Corder 1971 in Richards 1974, p. 160).

### 2.1.3.2 Approximative System

Nemser (1971) proposed another similar term to the Corder's idiosyncratic dialects which is known as "approximative system" in the process of learning TL. According to Nemser:

*An approximative system is the deviant linguistic system actually employed by the learner attempting to utilize the target language. Such approximative systems vary in character in accordance with proficiency level; variation is also introduced by learning experience (including exposure to a target language script system) communication function, personal learning characteristics, etc (p. 1-2).*

Nemser provided three fold assumptions on the bases of an approximative system:

- i) Learner's speech at a given stage is the patterned product of a linguistic system,  $L_a$  ( $L_a$  = An approximative system), distinct from  $L_s$  ( $L_s$  = Source Language) and  $L_T$  ( $L_T$  = Target Language), and internally structured.
- ii)  $L_a$ 's at successive stages of learning form an evolving series,  $L_{a1} \dots L_{an}$  ( $L_{a1} \dots L_{an}$  = System at Successive Stages of Proficiency).
- iii) In a given contact situation, the  $L_a$ 's of learner at the same stage of proficiency roughly coincide, with major variations ascribable to differences in learning experience (ibid, p. 2).

On the basis of the above assumptions, Nemser (1971) considers that the speech of a learner is structurally organized, manifesting the order and cohesiveness of a system, although frequently changing with a typical rapidity and is subjected to a radical re-organization through the massive intrusion of new elements as learning proceeds. He further emphasizes that such speech should be studied in its own terms not only by reference to SL and TL (p. 3).

Nemser (1971) views that an approximative system generally incorporates grammatical and lexical  $L_T$  elements. He provides arguments for the structural independence of an  $L_a$  from the  $L_s$  and target system. These arguments are as follows:

- i) The frequent and systematic occurrence of errors in non-native speech of elements, can neither be attributed to source language nor to the target language; and
- ii) The fluctuations in learning process are a process of change of grammatical category in normal language system which shows true internal coherence (p.6).

The stages of approximative system are proved to be differing not only in amount but also in type of interference. They are divided into two major stages by Nemser:

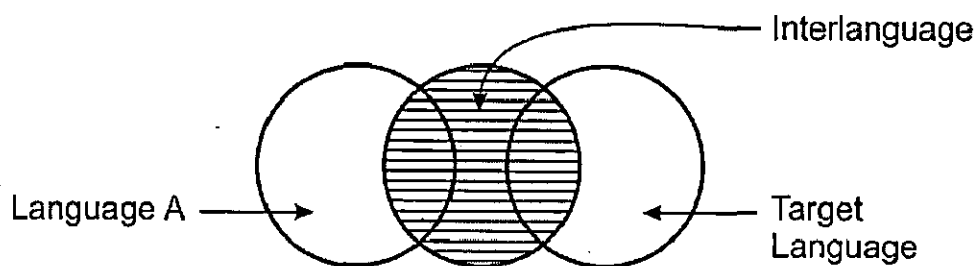
- i) The earlier stages are apparently characterized by extensive under differentiation i.e. syncretism of phonological, lexical, and grammatical category of target language with the learners formal elements he has acquired;
- ii) Later stages are normally marked as interference types, by the addition of reinterpretation, analogy, and hypercorrection, etc. (ibid, p.7).

In brief, it can be concluded that the errors merging in learning of a second or foreign language, which forms not only interference errors, but also extra-linguistic or developmental errors, must be studied with reference to the learners' approximative systems of language as well (ibid, p.12).

### **2.1.3.3 Interlanguage**

The term "interlanguage" (IL) was coined by Selinker (1972). He introduced IL first in paper "*language transfer*" (1969). The idea of IL as a dynamic, developing system was borrowed by Selinker from Corder's (1967) "*transitional competence*". Selinker (1972) defined IL as: "*a separate linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner's attempted production of a TL norm*" (p. 214). It can be implied that interlanguage is an intermediate system or language between

the native language and target language. It shares the characteristic of two social dialects of the languages. This system can be understood through the figure 2.4:



**Fig. 2.4: Inter-language System**

(Adapted from Richards 1974, p. 162)

According to Selinker's (1972) assumption, there are psychological structures latent in the brains which are activated when the learner attempts to learn a second language. Selinker called it as *latent psychological structure* which is similar to the concept of Lenneberg's (1967, p. 374-379) term *latent language structure*. According to Lenneberg it is:

- i) An already formulated arrangement in the brain;
- ii) Is the biological counterpart to universal grammar; and
- iii) Is transformed by the infant into the *realized structure* of a particular grammar in accordance with certain maturational stages (p. 211-12).

Selinker (1972) assumes that only observable data from meaningful performance situations can be established as relevant to interlingual identifications and these are as follows:

- i) The utterances in the learner's native language produced by the learner;
- ii) Interlanguage utterances produced by the learner ; and
- iii) Target language utterances produced by the native speakers of that target language.

On the basis of the above observations, Selinker hypothesizes the notion of the existence of a separate linguistic system, which he calls "interlanguage"(p. 214).

Selinker (1972) observed that many L2 learners fail to reach the TL competence unlike L1 learners. Certain rules and items as a result ‘fossilize’ in their mind; and he referred to this as “*fossilization*”. According to Selinker (1972), the phenomenon of fossilization as a central conceptualized notion in IL process, implicated both a cognitive mechanism known as the *fossilization mechanism* (p.221) and a performance-related structural phenomenon which was thought to be a constituent of a *latent psychological structure* that activates a learner’s acquisition of a second language. As a performance-related structural notion, it denoted specifically “*the regular reappearance in second-language performance of linguistic phenomena which were thought to be eradicated in the performance of the learner* (p. 211) (cited by Han 2004, p. 14).

Selinker (1972) defines fossilization as:

*Fossilizable linguistic phenomena are linguistic items, rules and subsystems which speakers of a particular native language will tend to keep in their interlanguage relative to a particular target language, no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation or instruction he receives in the target language ( p. 215).*

In 1978, Selinker and Lamendella explicitly define as:

*. . . a permanent cessation of IL learning before the learner has attained TL norms at all levels of linguistic structure and in all discourse domains in spite of the learner’s positive ability, opportunity, and motivation to learn and acculturate into target society (quoted by Han 2004, p. 15).*

According to Selinker (1972), the structures of *fossilizations* are erroneous deviant elements which are oriented in the performance of L2 learners. He argued that the most important phenomena in IL performance are those items, rules and subsystems which are *fossilisable* in terms of the five central processes underlying learner’s language which distinguish it from the way in which first language acquisition proceeds. They are as follows:

## ➤ Language Transfer

- Transfer of Training
- Strategies of L2 Learning
- Strategies of L2 Communication, and
- Overgeneralization of TL Rules.

Selinker (1972) experimentally demonstrated that, if fossilisable items, rules and subsystems which occur in IL performance are a result of the NL, then we are dealing with the process of *language transfer*; if these fossilisable items, rules, and subsystems are a result of identifiable items in training procedures, then we are dealing with the process of *transfer of training*; if they are a result of an identifiable approach by the learner to the material to be learned, then we are dealing with the *strategies of second language learning*; if they are a result of an identifiable approach by learner to communication with native speakers of the target language, then we are dealing with the *strategies of second language communication*; and finally, if they are a result of a clear overgeneralization of target language rules and semantic features, then we are dealing with the *overgeneralization of target language* linguistic material (p. 216-17).

Apart from these five fundamental processes in IL performance, Selinker (1972) also mentions some of the minor processes which account for the surface form of IL production such as: “spelling pronunciations”, “cognate pronunciation”, “holophrase learning” (Jain, 1969), “hypercorrection” and others like “long exposure to signs and headlines” which according to Jain (1969) affects by themselves the shape of Indians’ English IL utterances (p. 220-21).

### 2.1.4 The Factors Influencing L2 Learners’ Systems

In the preceding section, a detailed description of second language learners’ linguistic systems has been discussed in terms of “idiosyncratic dialect” (Corder 1971), “approximative system (Nemser 1971), and “interlanguage” (Selinker 1972). These notions involve the analysis of L2 learners’ errors on the basis of their linguistic systems. According to Richards and Sampson (1974), second language



learners' (SLLs') systems are influenced and characterized by seven factors which are as follow:

- Language transfer
- Intralingual interference
- Sociolinguistic situation
- Modality
- Age
- Successions of approximative systems;
- Universal hierarchy of difficulty

#### i) **Language Transfer**

According to Richards and Sampson (1974), the first factor that affects L2 learning process is language transfer. They define language transfer as “*sentences in the target language may exhibit interference from the mother tongue*” (quoted by Richards 1974, p. 5). They assert that language transfer was considered the major source of difficulty by linguists of contrastive analysis (ibid).

Odlin (1989, P. 27), defines language transfer: “*transfer is the influence resulting from the similarities and difference between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired.*”

Odlin (1989, p.4) asserts the significance of the “transfer” in the process of second language acquisition and claims that:

*Despite the counterarguments . . . there is a large and growing body of research that indicates that transfer is indeed a very important factor in second language acquisition* (quoted by Ellis, 1994, P. 29).

Lado (1957) argues that foreign language learners rely almost entirely on their NL in the process of learning the TL. Thus, language transfer is an important factor involved in the process of L2 learning, which works in very complicated ways and deeply influences and shapes L2 learners' linguistic systems.

## ii) Intra-lingual Interference

According to Richards and Sampson (1974), the term “Intralingual” refers to items produced by the learner of L2 which reflect not only the structure of the MT, but generalization based on partial exposure to the TL. Torrey (1966), Richards (1971a), and Brudhiprabha (1972) cited by Richards (1974, P. 6) propose that many intralingual errors represent difficulty of what are often low level rules in the TL, such as difference between the verb inflections. For example: “*I walk, she walks*”. According to them, it may be inferred that once basic rules such as those concerning subject – verb agreement, prediction, negation, etc. are acquired, a considerable amount of difficulty in L2 learning is related to selectional restrictions and to surface structure and contextual rules of the language (ibid).

Littlewood (1984) points out that many of the L2 learners’ incorrect notions are explicable by direct reference to the TL itself. These errors are precisely what EA is attempting to reveal. Those errors which are not due to transferring from MT are called “*intra-lingual*”. These errors show that L2 learners are processing the target language in its own terms and suggest that the L2 learner is employing similar strategies, which are often similar to those produced by the child in their MT. Thus, intra-lingual interference suggests that previous knowledge of the TL may influence and characterize later learning of that language (p. 22-23).

## iii) Sociolinguistic Situation

Richards and Sampson (1974, p. 7) state that: “*different settings for language use result in degrees and types of language learning*”. According to them, the distinction can be made in terms of the effects of the socio-cultural setting on the learner’s language and in terms of the relationship between the learner and the TL community and the linguistic markers of these relations and identities. The learner’s motivations for learning the TL and the effects of the socio-cultural setting are included in this context. In the process of language learning, distinctions is made between compounds/ coordinate bilingualism which rests upon an assumption that different settings for learning may motivate different processes of language learning. For example two languages may be learned in the same socio-cultural setting or in two different settings (cited in Richards 1974, P.6-7).

#### iv) Modality

The modality of exposure to the TL and modality of production may influence the learner's language. According to Richards and Sampson (1974), the production and perception of L2 learning learner may involve the acquisition of two partially overlapping systems. George (1971) as cited by Richards (1974, p. 9) claims that learning difficulties derived from audio-lingual introduction to *is*, *has*, in unstressed positions, which may be realized as /z/, leading to identification as a lexical item to such sentences as *She is a book*, *Her name has Sita*. Other examples of modality which influence the learner's approximative systems are spelling pronunciations and confusions of written and spoken styles (ibid).

#### v) Age

In the domain of second language learning (SLL), it has been noted that children learn L2 more easily and more proficiently in comparison to adults. Cases that have been most widely noted involve language acquisition by new immigrants and children brought up by bilingual parents. In such situations, it has been found that with adequate exposure children become completely bilingual, and are able to speak both languages with a fluency and accuracy that makes them undistinguishable from monolingual speakers. Adults brought into contact with the second language for the first time never succeed in ridding their speech in the SL of traces of the MT. Therefore, it seems as if the child still learning language as he learned his MT, while the adult has lost this ability (Wilkins, 1972, p.186). In this regard, Littlewood (1984) comments that:

*The most common explanation for this observation is that there is a 'critical period' during which the brain is flexible and learning can occur naturally and easily. Since this period ends around puberty, adolescents and adults can no longer call upon these natural learning capacities (p. 65).*

#### vi) Successions of Approximative Systems

Second language learner's learning system lacks stability. The learner is constantly formulating, testing, and revising his hypothesis about how the TL works and

consequently improves it continuously. According to Richards and Sampson (1974), most studies of second language learners system have dealt with learner's production rather than his comprehension of language therefore, they raise the question as to whether the grammar by which the learner understands speech (receptive competence) is the same as that by which he produces speech (productive competence). They assume that the learner hears a significant number of deviant sentences. They also observed another phenomenon, which is an evidence of the instability of the learner's approximative system in that there are many elements which are observed to go through a stage where they are sometimes used and sometimes omitted. Therefore, when rules for items/ structure unique to learners' approximative systems are to be written, they will need to be embodied in a format reflecting their probability of occurrence (cited by Richards 1974, p. 12).

#### **vii) Universal Hierarchy of Difficulty**

This factor is related to inherent difficulty towards certain phonological, syntactic or semantic elements and structures. Richards and Sampson (1974) claim that some forms may be inherently difficult to learn not only for non-native speakers (NNSs) of a given language but also for native speakers (NSs) as well. Further, they state that if a hierarchy of difficulty is postulated for learners of a given language background, it must include not only IL difficulties but also take into account a possible universal hierarchy of difficulty. They also assume that the concept of difficulty affects the learner's organization of what he perceives (learning strategies) and the organization of what he produces (communicative strategies). Regarding identifying the areas of difficulty in terms of interlingual difference for the learner, they assume that it is feasible to compare categories across languages, but this may practically not be possible. Richards and Sampson state that what forms syntax in one language may be vocabulary in another. In this regard, they quote Torrey (1971):

*... Many aspects of language learning are very difficult to analyze into specific responses, and even where it is possible the responses are various and at different levels (one item may belong to two levels in one language and four in another) . . . degrees of learning would*

*have to be examined in terms of specific instances rather than with the general category of responses* (quoted by Richards and Sampson in Richards 1974, p.13).

According to Richards and Sampson (1974), the concept of difficulty in language learning has been defined by psycholinguists in terms of factors such as sentence length, processing time required, derivational complexity, types of embedding, number of transformations, and semantic complexity. As for production, the learners' output is organized in terms of what he finds easiest to say definitely; what the learner says is not necessarily identifiable with what he knows about the TL. This is because he may avoid a word or structure which he finds difficult to say. This may force the learner for example, to choose a particular tense instead of the required one. (*I'm going to telephone you tonight* instead of *"I'll telephone you tonight"*.) Thus, in the light of the above discussion it can be concluded that universal hierarchy of difficulty influences the L2 learning learner's system (cited by Richards 1974, p. 14).

### **2.1.5 Definition of Error**

The word "error" has been defined differently by different linguists. Ellis (1994) defines it as:

*Learners make errors in both comprehension and production. Children learning their first language (L1), adult native speakers, and second language learners; they all make errors which have a different name according to the group committing the error. Children's errors have called as "transitional forms", the native speakers' ones are known as "slips of the tongue" and the second language (L2) errors are considered "unwanted forms" (p. 48).*

According to Hendrickson (1978) etymologically, "error" is: *a word derived from Latin errare meaning "to wander, roam or stray," depends on its use for a particular purpose or objective. For the purpose of a discussion on error correction in foreign language teaching, this writer defines an error as an utterance, form, or structure*

*that a particular language teacher deems unacceptable because of its inappropriate use or its absence in real-life discourse (p. 387).*

Gass and Selinker (1994) define 'error' as *'red flags' those provide evidence of the learner's knowledge of the second language (p.102)*. Corder (1973) refers to 'errors' as *'breaches of code.'* According to him, the term 'error' *tends to be reserved for willful or negligent breaches of a rule which is known or ought to be known or is thought to be known by the offender (p. 259-260).*

### **2.1.5.1 Related Terms of Error**

The term "error" is associated with many similar linguistic terms. Philosophers or linguists make distinctions amongst words like 'mistakes', 'lapses or slips', 'deviations', etc. that are very close to 'errors'. These terms can be defined as follows:

**2.1.5.1.1 Mistakes:** Corder (1973, 1974) calls mistakes as *"slips of the tongue or slips of the pen"*. Typical of such slips are the substitution, transposition, or omission, of some segment of an utterance, such as a speech sound, morpheme, a word or even a phrase. These types of mistakes usually occur, *"when we are tired, nervous, or in some sort of situation of stress or uncertainty, or when our attention is divided or we are absorbed in some non linguistic activity"* (p. 257-258).

Corder further maintains that mistakes can not be the result of an imperfect knowledge of the language or an imperfect competence. These are the erroneous or ill- formed utterances which are the result of some failure of performance caused by factors such as memory limitations, spelling pronunciation, fatigue and emotional strain etc. The noticeable thing about mistakes is that they are increased in frequency under conditions of nervousness, tiredness and stress or uncertainty, or when the speaker is absorbed in some non-linguistic activity. They are totally and typically random and can be corrected by the learners when their attention is drawn towards them. Mistakes are unpredictable as they occur suddenly and unconsciously. They do not have any regularity in their occurrence and are therefore, non-systematic. In this relation Miller (1966) says that: *"It would be meaningless to state rules for making mistakes"* (cited in Richards 1974, p. 25).

**2.1.5.1.2 Lapses/Slips:** Native speakers often commit mistakes as slips or false starts or confusion of structure. Corder (1973) refers to these mistakes as “*lapses*”. According to Corder, lapses have no relevance to the problem of language learning (p. 259-61). Mistakes made by adult native speaker cannot be considered as errors because they are not regular and systematic. These mistakes are not constant, and do not recur. Such mistakes are called “lapses/slips” (Viswanatham 2002, p. 159). Norrish (1983, p. 8) coined the term ‘*lapse*’ which is similar to Corder’s term ‘mistake’. Norrish (1983) claims:

*There is another type of wrong usage which is neither a mistake nor an error and can happen to anyone at anytime. This is a lapse, which may be due to lack of concentration, shortness of memory, fatigue, etc. A lapse bears little relation to whether or not a given form in the language has been learnt, has not been learnt or in the process of being learnt (quoted by Mishra 2005, p. 38).*

**2.1.5.1.3 Deviations:** Richards (1972) proposed the term ‘deviation’ in Indian ESL environment. He claims that:

*. . . in a second language setting, deviations (in the sense of Kachru (1966) explainable in terms of the socio-cultural context in which English functions in India) are reflections of interlingual creativity (cited in Mishra 2005, p. 39)..*

This quotation of Richards is true not only in India but also all the other ESL situations. The deviation in varieties of English is found all over the world. But here in India these ‘deviations’ are called errors either in ESL teaching or learning situations (ibid).

## **2.1.6 Types of Errors**

Several types of errors have been defined in the field of applied linguistics by different linguists and philosophers. Some of the significant types of errors are as follows:

Chomsky (1965) identifies two major types of errors: competence and performance. The former refers to a native speaker's knowledge of his language while, the later one refers to the speaker's actual uses of his language for communicative purpose. According to Chomsky, although a native speaker (NS) of a language has a perfect knowledge of the system of his mother tongue (MT), still he can utter utterances which are judged as *ungrammatical* by other NS; these are called performance errors (cited in Al- Awaid 2010, p. 68). Corder maintains that the production of *ungrammatical utterances* by NS of a given language is not the result of imperfect knowledge, because they can be corrected by the speaker when his attention is drawn towards his mistakes. Therefore, these ungrammatical utterances are adventitious artifacts of linguistic performance and do not reflect a defect in this native speaker's knowledge of his own language. Corder believes in differentiating between "mistakes" and errors. According to Corder, "mistakes" are due to memory lapses, physical state, such as tiredness, and psychological conditions such as a strong emotion, etc. which arise from failures to utilize a known system correctly (performance errors). While systematic errors which are typically produced by L2 learners who do not yet have a full command of some institutionalized language system (competence errors) or have not yet internalized the conventions of second language formation (ibid).

Burt (1975, p. 56-7) posits a distinction between two categories of errors: "global errors" and "local errors".

#### **i) Global Errors**

Burt defines "global errors" as; errors that affect overall sentence organization. The most systematic global errors include: Wrong word order, missing, wrong, or misplaced sentence connectors, and wrong syntactic organization.

#### **ii) Local Errors**

According to Burt, "local errors" are that affect single elements (constituents) in a sentence, such as errors in noun and verb inflections, articles, auxiliaries and the formation of quantifiers.



Corder (1973) categorized errors as overtly and covertly:

- i) **Overtly Errors:** are ungrammatical and ill- formed at the sentence level.
- ii) **Covert Errors:** are superficially well-formed at the sentence level but are not interpretable within the context of communication. For example, *I'm fine, thanks*, is grammatically a correct sentence but if it is given as an answer to the question of *How old are you?*, it is a covertly error (cited in Erdoğan2005, p. 264-65).

Dulay and Burt (1972) describe errors based in terms of “Goofs”. According to them, there are four types of goofs:

- i) **Interference- like Goofs:** These types of goofs show the structure of the learner’s MT, but are not available in L1 acquisition data of TL.
- ii) **L1 Developmental Goofs:** On the basis of insufficient information of the TL, learners over generalize the structure of the TL. These types of goof do not reflect L1 structure, but are found in L1 data of the TL.
- iii) **Ambiguous Goofs:** Those goofs which can be characterized as either interference- like goofs or L1 Developmental goofs.
- iv) **Unique Goofs:** These goofs cannot be described as developmental goof or as L1 interference (p. 31).

Corder (1974) classified errors into four types:

- i) **Referential Errors:** Errors of appropriateness may be generally classified into referential-errors, where the speakers use a term with the intention of referring to some features of the world to which it is conventionally inapplicable, i.e. when he calls: ‘*a hat*’, ‘*a cap*.’
- ii) **Register Errors:** where, for example, in a naval context, the learner refers to a naval *ship* as *a boat*.
- iii) **Social Errors:** Where he selects forms which are inappropriate to his social relations to his listener for example, when a pupil greets his teacher with: Well, how are we today, old man?

... and **iv): Textual Errors:** When the speaker does not select structurally correct form to show the intended relation between two sentences in a discourse, for example, in answer to the question: *who is the man over there?* \*John is (p. 123-124).

Corder (1974) distinguishes three types of errors on the basis of their systematicity:

- i) **Pre-Systematic Errors:** According to Corder, these errors occur when the learner is unaware of the existence of a particular rule in the TL, these are random. He may by chance produce an accurate utterance. When he is asked to correct his utterance he neither can correct his sentence nor give the description of why he chose the particular form he did.
- ii) **Systematic Errors:** According to Corder, these errors occur when the learner has discovered the rule but it is the wrong one. His errors are regular. When asked to correct his errors he cannot do so, but he can give the description of the rule he is following.
- iii) **Post-Systematic Errors:** According to Corder, these errors occur when the learner knows the correct TL rule but uses it inconsistently. He has learned the rule, but fails due to lack of attention or lapse of memory (makes a mistake) (p. 131).

There are two more areas related to the types of errors: *domain* and *extent*. Lennon cited by Erdoğan (2005) presents similar concepts of two related dimensions of error that is *domain* and *extent*. Domain is the rank of linguistic unit from phoneme to discourse that must be taken as context in order for the error to be understood, while, extent on the other hand, is the rank of linguistic unit which is deleted, replaced, supplied or reordered in order to repair the sentence (p. 264).

### 2.1.7 Sources of Errors

Empirical studies of the previous four or five decades have realized that there are two major categories of sources of errors in second language learning which are called as *interlingual* and *intralingual*. Those errors, the sources of which can be traced back to the native language of the learner and are, explained in terms of

L1 transfer are called interlingual errors. The errors originate within the structure of target or second language itself, are called *intralingual errors* or termed as *developmental errors*. Therefore, researchers like Richards (1971, 1974); Duskova (1969), George (1972), Selinker (1972), Corder (1974), and Chan (1975) have classified the sources of errors into two major categories:

### 2.1.7.1 Interlingual Errors

Interlingual errors are the errors which are caused by the learners' native language. These errors are also known as language transfer or interference. Numerous philosophers have recognized the interference of learner's MT in L2 learning. Lado (1957) gives the importance of L1 in L2 learning holding the view that mother tongue (MT) is the most significant source of errors in L2 acquisition and claims that: "*Wherever there are differences between the student's native language and the target language, there will be interference from the native language*" (p.2). Weinreich (1953) has already established this phenomenon claiming that:

*Those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language i.e. as a result of language contact, will be referred to as INTERFERENCE phenomena (p.1).*

Lee (1968) cited in Ellis (1986) claims that the prime cause, or even the sole cause of difficulty and error in foreign – language learning is interference coming from the learners' native language. Interlingual errors entail both positive and negative effects on L2 learning. In this regard, Wilkins (1972) claims that:

*When learning a foreign language an individual already knows his mother- tongue, and it is this which he attempts to transfer. The transfer may prove to be justified because the structure of the two languages is similar – in that case we get 'positive transfer' or 'facilitation' – or it may prove unjustified because the structures of the two languages are different – in that case we get 'negative transfer' – or interference (p. 199).*

Corder (1974) also noticed that there are many errors that can be traced back to MT. Due to strong resemblance to that language, the learner tries to transfer one word for another. The errors arising from the influence of learner's MT are termed as "*transfer errors*" which have either positive or negative effect on learning. Tarone (1969) as cited by Al- Awaid (2010, p.75) categorized transfer errors into three types:

- i) Positive transfer refers to the situation where the learners do not face any difficulty in producing an item which is common in native and target language.
- ii) Negative transfer refers to the situation in which the learner's attempt to use inappropriate sound patterns and elements of the mother tongue instead of the patterns of the TL.
- iii) Divergent negative transfer is another type of situation where the L2 learners perceive the TL elements as most difficult. It occurs in the case of the purely non-cognate situation

Chan (1975) in his investigation of English speakers learning Spanish as an L2 found 51% interlingual errors. Likewise Nickel (1981) found 80% errors which caused by interference from native language (ibid). Ellis (1994) claims that transfer errors are common at the phonological and lexical levels of language than in grammatical level.

#### **2.1.7.2 Intralingual Errors**

Researchers found that L1 interference occurs in certain contexts, but in some contexts other types of errors occur. Lance (1969), Tripp (1970), George (1972) and Dulay and Burt (1972) empirically found that only one – third of the total deviations could be attributed to language transfer or MTI. A different class of errors may be noticed such as '*did he comed*', '*I can to speak to French*', etc. which could not be traced back to the learner's native language background. Errors of this type may be called intralingual and developmental errors which reflect the generalizations based on partial exposure to the target language and not the structure of the mother tongue. These errors reflect the learner's competence at a particular stage, and illustrate

some of the general characteristics of language acquisition. Their origins are found within the structure of English itself.

Richards (1970) refers to these errors as: “*items produced by the learner which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply*” (p. 5-6). These errors are explained in terms of various learning strategies and factors such as overgeneralization, simplification, fossilization, avoidance, inadequate learning, and false concepts hypothesis are involved in these errors. According to Richards (1970), intralingual or developmental errors can be categorized into the following sub-categories:

#### **2.1.7.2.1 Overgeneralization**

When the language learner applies his past experience or knowledge in the use of TL, based on the common structure of the language, the errors committed are called *over generalizations*. Jacobvits (1969) defines:

*The use of previously available strategies in new situations . . . . In second language learning . . . some of these strategies will prove helpful in organizing the facts about the second language, but others, perhaps due to superficial similarities, will be misleading and inapplicable (quoted by Richards 1970, p. 6).*

According to Richards (1970, p.6-7), over-generalization errors occur when the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the target language. For example: *he can sings, we are hope, It is occurs, he come from*. Over-generalization generally involves the creation of one deviant structure in place of two regular structures. It may be the result of the learner reducing his linguistic burden. Omitting of the third person (-s), over-generalization removes the necessity for concord, thus relieving the learner of considerable effort.

According to Jain (1969), for some learners, the generalizations acquire the status of rules. These rules, used creatively are overgeneralized and give rise to the many inflectional errors so well known to the second language teachers such as ‘mouse –

mouses', 'machinery – machineries', 'hit – hitted', and 'dig – digged' (cited in Richards 1974, p.196).

According to Corder (1974), other examples of errors are when the learner has discovered a correct rule but still regularly commits errors as he has not yet explored the precise application of the rule. Also the learner can perform deviant utterances like *he goed*, *he cans sing* and *many mens*. These types of errors are committed due to *overgeneralization* or *analogical errors*. The analogical errors are supposed to be inherent and inevitable part of language learning process (p.130).

#### **2.1.7.2.2 Ignorance of Rule Restrictions**

Ignorance of rule restrictions occurs when the L2 learner fails to understand or observe the restrictions existing in the structures of TL. Here, the learner shows tendency to apply the application of rules to the contexts in TL where they do not apply. For instance:

- i)        *The man who I saw him*
- ii)      *I made him to do it*

The above sentence violates the limitation on subjects in structures with *who* and on the distribution of *make*. According to Richards (1970), some rule restriction errors may be accounted for in terms of analogy while, the other examples may be the result of rote learning of rules or lack of understanding of the rules. Analogy plays an important role in the misuse of prepositions. Failure to observe restrictions in article usage may also be derived from analogy, the learner rationalizing a deviant usage from his previous experience of English.

#### **2.1.7.2.3 Incomplete Application of Rules**

Incomplete application of rules involves the occurrence of structures whose deviancy represents the degree of development of the rules required to produce acceptable utterances. According to Richards (1970), systematic difficulty in the use of declarative word order in questions may be observed. A declarative form may be used as a question, one of the transformations in a series may be omitted, or a question word may simply be added to the statement form (p.12-13). Richards (1971)

as cited by Al –Awaid (2010, p. 78) claims that these errors occur because of faulty presentation of these structures either in the teaching process or materials inappropriately.

#### 2.1.7.2.4 Hypothesized False Concepts

According to Richards (1970), apart from the wide range of intralingual errors, there is a class of developmental errors which derive from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. These errors are attributed to poor gradation of teaching items. For example, the use of 'was', as a marker of the past tense in the sentence:

*One day it was happened*

Likewise, the use of 'is' as a marker of the present tense in the sentence:

*He is speaks French*

Richards also found the examples of continuous form instead of the simple past in narrative; elsewhere they encounter confusion between *too*, *so*, and *very*, between *come* and *go* and so on (Richards 1970, p.14-15). The causes or sources of these types of errors according to Richards traced back to the classroom presentation. Corder (1974) refers to these errors as *teaching-induced errors* and defines that these errors occur due to classroom contexts from materials and methods used in the teaching. This type of error represents inefficiency in the learning-teaching process. Errors of this sort are termed as *teaching- induced error*. Stenson (1974) also termed it as "*induced errors*" Selinker (1972) called these errors as *transfer of training* which occur whenever the effects of prior learning or bad teaching influence the performance of the learner.

Brown (1987) categorized the sources of errors into four types:

**Interlingual Transfer:** At the starting stage of learning, an L2 is known as interlingual/interference of NL because the learner depends on his/her L1 from which he can draw the linguistic aid. Generally English language learner infers his MT's patterns in the language acquisition. For example, the learner pronounces sheep as ship.

**Intralingual Transfer:** When a learner has started to acquire the new patterns or structures of the target language, more and more intralingual transfer would occur within the target language.

**Context of Learning:** It refers to the classroom environment with its teacher and materials. Both interlingual and intralingual errors can occur due to the ineffective context of learning. Faulty teaching method may lead a learner to make faulty generalization about the language. Richards (1971) referred to these errors as “false concepts” and Stenson (1974) called them “induced errors”. These errors according to Brown usually occur because of the following reasons:

- i) Misleading explanation by the class teacher;
- ii) Faulty presentation of a structure of material or in a textbook;
- iii) Improperly contextualized patterns;
- iv) Confused vocabulary items due to wrong presentation;
- v) Inappropriately formal forms of language.

**Communication Strategies:** According to Brown, when a learner tries to get a message across to a listener or reader, he or she may employ some technique such as word coinage, false cognate, circumlocution, and fabricated patterns which may cause errors (p.180).

Nelson Brooks (1964, p. 58) states four likely reasons for the occurrence of errors:

- i) The student may make a random response, that is, he may simply not know which of the many responses is the right one;
- ii) the student may have encountered the model but not have practiced it a sufficient number of times;
- iii) distortion may have been induced by dissimilar patterns in English; and
- iv) The student may have made a response that follows a sound general rule but, because of an anomaly in the new language, is incorrect in the new language (cited by Olsson 1972, p. 19).

According to Brooks, there are other reasons why the student commits errors when learning a foreign language. The list includes the wandering of attention, laziness,



capacity, and a lack of interest. Errors may also occur because of the personal failure of the teacher and/or by the failure of the method he is using (ibid).

Verma, S.K. and N. Krishnaswamy (1989) suggested the following sources of errors committed by second language learners:

- i) The gravitational pull of the first language/ mother tongue;
- ii) Internal analogy and overgeneralization (i.e. *childrens, furnitures, teached, bringed, a milk*, etc., are 'created' on the basis of other terms like *boys, tables, walked, worked, a man*, etc.);
- iii) Pronunciation according to spelling;
- iv) Bad teaching;
- v) Exposure to the non-standard variety used outside the classroom;
- vi) The attitude of community, those in power, the policy of the government and such other factors;
- vii) Failure to understand the nature of the second language;
- viii) Lack of adequate vocabulary; and
- ix) The cultural gap between the two systems (p.348).

Cowen (2008) classified the four major sources of grammatical errors committed by second language learners:

- Performance errors
- Imperfect learning
- Errors of Overgeneralization
- Influence of the native language

#### **i) Performance Errors**

ESL learners often commit mistakes by making ungrammatical or incorrect sentences not as native speakers of English make in their speech or writing; all these types of errors simply are called *performance errors*. Performance errors reveal that the committed errors are not due to the ignorance of the rules or conventions of the grammar, but they are committed because occurrence of errors is a natural process which usually occurs at the time of speaking or writing by the speaker or hearer as

well. A perfect example of this type of error is the lack of subject-verb agreement in a sentence. For example:

*\*No matter where you live, the great taste of your favorite lays flavor are just around the corner.*

## ii) Imperfect Learning

These types of errors usually occur when the learners make mistakes in acquiring the norms of grammar; because they neither memorize all the rules and regulations of grammar, nor have internalized or automatized the rules and limitations which apply to that language. The main cause of error might be ungrammatical construction of a sentence as:

*\*Does he takes his breakfast?*

This wrong question indicates that the learner has not acquired the rules of forming yes/no question in English.

## iii) Errors of Overgeneralization

This is a source of error where a learner uses a grammar rule to make sentences which are not there in target language grammar. For example:

*\*Mom made Bill to go to the party.*

## iv) Influence of the Native Language

Most of the ungrammatical sentences ESL learners make result from the transfer of grammar rules from their MT to second language. These L1 transfer errors occur in various forms. For instance; often a grammatical category related to certain L1 verbs is transferred when the learner starts to learn English, such as in Spanish verb which are semantically equal to English auxiliary verb like- 'can' is followed by infinite form "ir" (to go).

For example:               podemos ir en taxi

                                  We can to go in taxi

                                  "We can go by taxi"

                                  \*We can to go by taxi (p.45).

On the basis of the above discussions, it can be concluded that the sources of errors identified by different linguists are usually of two types: interlingual and intralingual errors.

#### **2.1.8 Significance of Learners' Errors**

The study of learners' errors is very significant in understanding the process of second language learning. Corder cited by Richards (1974, p. 1) notices that: "*the learner's errors are indicative both of state of the learner's knowledge, and of the ways in which a second language is learned.*". Corder (1981) called error analysis as a "clinical approach to the study of the learner's language" (p. 129). Learner's errors are significant to teachers, researchers as well as to the learner. Corder (1967) puts this in the following ways:

*They are significant in three different ways. First to the teacher, in that they tell him, if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed, and consequently, what remains for him to learn. Second, they provide evidence to the researcher of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the language. Thirdly, they are indispensable to the learner himself, because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn (p. 167).*

Stevens (1969) considered that errors should not be viewed as problems to overcome, but rather as normal and inevitable features indicating the strategies that learner use. He further suggests that,

*If a regular pattern of errors could be observed in the performance of all learners in a given situation, and if a learner were seen to progress through this pattern, his errors could be taken as evidence not of failure but of success and achievement in learning (quoted by Richards 1974, p. 4).*

Corder (1973, p.265-6) has given both theoretical as well as practical uses of learner's errors which are discussed in the following subsections:

### **2.1.8.1 Practical Uses of Error Analysis**

According to Corder, the most obvious practical use of the analysis of errors is to the teacher. Errors provide feedback; they tell the teacher something about the effectiveness of his teaching materials and his teaching techniques, and show him what parts of the syllabus he has been following have been inadequately learned or taught and need further attention. They enable him to decide whether he can move on to the next item on the syllabus or whether he must devote more time on the item on which he has been working on. This is the day -to-day value of errors.

### **2.1.8.2 Theoretical Uses of Error Analysis**

A scientific discipline to the solution of practical problems provides feedback to theory. The study of learners' errors is such an application. The psycholinguist predicts that the nature of the mother tongue will facilitate or make difficult the learning of certain aspects of a second language. Corder adds that when we make a comparative study of two languages, we identify certain features of the second language as different from those of the MT and predict that the learner will find them difficult, and will show this to be the case by making errors. Thus, the study of errors is part of an "experiment" to confirm or disprove the psycholinguistic theory or "transfer". Therefore, the theoretical interests in studies of error have a feedback from both the descriptive linguistics and psycholinguistic.

Wilkins (1972, p. 204) claims that in deciding what should be the linguistic input to language teaching materials, teachers and researchers should certainly examine and seek an explanation for errors that are typically made by different groups of learners. In this way, errors are significant as they indicate the difficulties the learners encounter in learning L2.

According to Jain (1974), second language learner's errors are potentially important for:

- i) The understanding of the process of second language acquisition, and consequently,
- ii) The planning of courses incorporating the psychology of second language learning (cited in Richards 1974, p. 189).

Thus, on the basis of discussed insights, it can be said that the learners' errors shows that actual learning is taking place instead of mere imitation. In this way, the attitudes toward the error have changed from preventing errors to learning from them. Learning from errors has become a significant purpose of error analysis.

### **2.1.9 Weaknesses of Error Analysis**

A substantial number of critics, such as Bell (1974); Schachter and Celce – Murcia (1977); Long and Sato (1984); and Van Els et al. (1984) etc, challenged the Error Analysis. EA was criticized due to its limitations in scope as well as the weaknesses in its methodology (Ellis 1994, p. 67). The most important drawback or weaknesses of EA can be described as follows:

Corder quoted by James (1998) argues that:

*It is not deemed legitimate . . . to compare the child's or the foreign language learner's ID [idiosyncratic dialect] to the dialect of adults or of native speakers respectively." the reason is that "the childs' or the foreign language learner are neither deliberately nor pathologically deviant in their language, so it would be wrong to refer to their repertoire erroneous (p. 16).*

Bell calls EA as "a recent pseudo procedure in applied linguistics" and claims that error analysis data are of only poor statistical inference. Errors are usually interpreted subjectively and it lacks predictive power (cited by James 1998, p. 17).

Avoiding errors has been considered as one of the most important deficiencies of EA. Schachter (1974) empirically criticizes that the EA does not take into account the strategy of avoidance. Avoided errors are those linguistic elements where language learners tend to avoid certain target language items which they are not sure about, and so they do not commit errors in the areas where they are expected to commit errors.

Another pitfall of EA observed by Hammerberg (1974, p. 185) as cited by James (1998) is the insufficiency of error analysis, which according to him lies in its one-

sided practice of “*analyzing out the errors and neglecting the careful description of the non-errors*” (p.17).

More criticisms come from Dulay et al. (1982, p. 141) who criticize the EA:

- i) The confusion of error description of errors with error explanation,
- ii) The lack of precision and specificity in the definition of error categories, and
- iii) Simplistic categorization of the causes of learners' error (cited by James 1998, P.18)

One serious weakness of EA studies according to Ellis (1994) is that most of the studies concerning EA and classification are cross- sectional. To this, he adds that little care has been taken to separate the errors made by learners at different stages of development. As a result, “EA has not proved very effective in helping us understand how learners develop knowledge of second language over time” (p. 68)

However, in spite of all the challenges EA remains the most wide-spread approach as it has been proved to be the effective technique to identify L2 learners' errors. Schachter and Celce Murcia (1974) claim that, “error analysis currently appears to be the darling of the 70s” (p. 442).

#### **2.1.10 Second Language Acquisition**

Second language acquisition (SLA) is an interdisciplinary field and an intersection of phonology, linguistics, applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, and educational science. Considerable changes have been done in each of these areas over period of time (Robinson, p., & Ellis, N.C 2008, P. 406).

Richards, Platt & Platt (1985) define SLA as follows:

*The process by which people develop proficiency in second or foreign language. The term ‘second language acquisition’ has been used particularly in the USA by researchers interested in: (a) longitudinal studies and case studies of the syntax and phonology in second and foreign language learners, (b) analysis of the spoken word and*

*written discourse of second and foreign language barriers, and (c) the study of other aspects of language development (p. 325).*

Ellis (1994) identifies a number of different areas of SLA that have been investigated. In the first area the description of the characteristics of learner language is concerned; this description provides the researcher with significant information about how language acquisition takes place. Attention here is concentrated on four aspects of the learner:

- i) Errors,
- ii) Acquisition orders and developmental sequences,
- iii) Variability, and
- iv) Pragmatic features relating to the way language is used in context for communication purposes.

One of the goals of SLA research is to describe learner's language and to show how it works as a system. The second area, concerns learner-external factors relating to the social context of acquisition and to the input and interaction which the learner experiences. The third area, learner –internal mechanisms, concerns how acquisition takes place and how learners use their resources in communication. According to Ellis (1994), internal mechanisms are mental and largely hidden from view, although not necessarily completely unconscious. They relate to:

- i) The transfer of knowledge from the learner's L1,
- ii) The universal processes involved in converting input into intake and restructuring existing L2 knowledge systems,
- iii) The utilization of innate knowledge of linguistic universals, and
- iv) The processes for using L2 knowledge in performance, in particular those involved in dealing with problems of communication (p.17-18).

Thus, the study of learner external factors and learner- internal factors constitute an attempt to explain how L2 acquisition takes place. Also, this area is concerned with individual learner differences and what causes them. The learners differ with regard to factors such as motivation and aptitude, and also in the use of various learning strategies such as interferencing and self monitoring for obtaining input and for learning from it. Therefore, according to Ellis (1994), the study of these general

factors and learner strategies helps to explain why some learners learn more rapidly than those and why reach higher level of proficiency.

According to Harmer (1983, P.31), an important distinction between acquisition and learning a language has been drawn by Krashen who characterizes the *acquisition* as a subconscious process which results in the knowledge of a language While, *learning* is a conscious process which results only in knowing about the language. It is assumed that second or foreign language learning is somewhat similar to the child's acquisition of his MT. Though the limitation on the language a child listens, he is not taught the language unconsciously, nor is he set out to learn it consciously. The child's ability to use language gradually is the consequence of numerous subconscious processes. Language has to be acquired as the result of some deeper experience than the concentration on a grammar point, just as it is when children learn their first language.

Corder (1967, p. 162) makes a distinction between the processes of acquiring the mother tongue and the learning of a second language. According to him, the mother tongue is inevitable whereas there is no such inevitability about the learning of a second language; that the learning of the mother tongue is part of the whole maturational process of the child, while learning a second language normally begins only after the maturational process is largely complete; that the infants start with no overt language behavior while in the case of second language learner such behavior, of course exists; that the motivation for language learning a first language is quite different from that for learning a second language.

## **2.2 Description of English Articles**

This section of the chapter provides a brief description of English articles in terms of definition, meaning, types, functions and uses.

### **2.2.1 What are Articles?**

Articles (a/an, the) are a small but extremely important area of syntax in English grammar. According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1990), they are the commonest central class of determiners. Lang (2010, p. 13) asserts that articles belong to the



closed class of function words in English. Taylor and Taylors (1990, p. 89) provided a complete definition of articles:

*Articles play syntactic roles, belong to the closed class, are highly frequent, are monosyllabic, have little semantic content, are not used alone in complete utterances, are unstressed in normal use, and are redundant and predictable (quoted by Lang 2010, p.13).*

Articles are divided into two major kinds or categories. The definite '*the*' which is used to refer to specific or particular nouns; the indefinite '*a/an*' that is used to modify non-specific or non-particular nouns. There are a large number of nouns such as: names of languages and nationalities: Chinese, English; sports: volleyball, hockey; academic subjects: mathematics, biology, history, etc. which do not take any article it is called zero articles and is symbolized as Ø.

### 2.2.2 Meaning of Articles

Articles may convey various meanings. Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999) provided the description of articles on the basis of two references: Generic meaning in which all members of a species or class are referred to. For example:

*A tiger* is a dangerous animal.  
*The tiger* is a dangerous animal.  
Ø *Tigers* are dangerous animals.

And non-generic meaning in which one or more individual members of a species or class is referred to. For example:

*A tiger* escaped from the zoo.  
*The tigers* escaped from the zoo.  
Ø *Tigers* escaped from the zoo.

In the above examples, an individual animal or animals are being commented upon – not all tigers. Thus, all the three types of articles can be used to make a *generic* and *non-generic meaning*: *the* usually, and *a/an* always with singular count nouns; and *zero* with plural count and non-count nouns are used (p. 277-8).

### 2.2.3 Functions and Uses of Articles

According to Cowan (2008), there are basically two types of articles in English: definite (*the*) and indefinite (*a/an*). Uses of articles are as follows:

#### 2.2.3.1 Uses of the Indefinite Article

The indefinite article *a/an* was found in Old English which is the weak form of *one*, so it is used in its original numerical sense of *one*. According to Quirk et al (1985, p. 272) cited by Hawkins (2009, p. 211), “*the major function of the indefinite article is that of an unmarked article in the sense that it is used for singular count nouns where the conditions for the use of ‘the’ do not obtain.*”

Cowan (2008) suggests that indefinite article *a/an*, can express at least two kinds of indefiniteness:

- i) It can express the idea of “one”, for example: John bought *a new dress*.
- ii) It can also signify membership in a particular group or set, for example: she is *a veterinarian* (p. 212).

The use of the indefinite article is based on the pronunciation of the sound of next word because it has two forms *a* and *an* which are used differently as follows:

#### “A” is used with:

- i) The word, that begins with a consonant sound/ letter, uses *a*, e.g.: *a boy, a cat, a woman, a chair, a girl, a dog...*etc.
- ii) The words, in which vowels exist but are pronounced as consonants, take *a* instead of *an* e.g.: *a European, a university, a union, a useful, a ewe, a one-way street*, etc.

#### “An” is used:

- i) Before words beginning with a vowel sound, For instance: *an orange, an apple, an octopus, an English man, an umbrella*, etc.
- ii) Before words beginning with a consonant but are pronounced as *vowel sounds* like: *an M.P, an S-bend, an M.L.A, an X-ray, an L- shaped....etc.*

- iii) Before words beginning with 'H' when it is silent. For example: *an heir, an honest man, an honour, an honorable person, an hour late*, etc.

**Indefinite Article "a/an" may also be used with**

- i) Certain expressions of quantity: e.g.: *a lot of, a couple, a great deal, a dozen (one dozen is also possible), and a great many*, etc.
- ii) Certain numbers: *a hundred, a thousand*, etc.
- iii) When a whole number is preceded by half: One and *a half kilos, a kilo and a half*.
- iv) As distributive: *Once a day, sixpence a pound . . .* etc.
- v) Exclamations before singular, countable nouns: *Such a long queue! What a beautiful girl!*, etc.
- vi) Mr. / Mrs. / miss + *surname*. If we say, *a Mr. Smith, A Mr. Smith* means '*a man called*', and implies that he is a stranger to the speaker, while, Mr. Smith without '*a*' implies that the speaker is aware of Mr. Smith or his existence.
- vii) With a figurative language especially in simile and metaphor: e.g.: a) *He is a lion.* (Metaphor). b) *He is as brave as a lion.* (Simile)
- viii) Idiomatically with objects like 'make' and 'take': *make a fool of, take a while* etc.
- ix) Objects come after do, tell, become: *tell a lie, do a favor, become a bumpkin*, etc.
- x) With a noun complement, this includes names of professions: *Mr. John is a doctor*.
- xi) With parts of body, if there are more than one: *John lost a hand in the war*.
- xii) In expressions of price, speed, ratio, etc: *10p a dozen, five kilometers an hour, three times a day*, etc.
- xiii) With many prepositional phrases denoting time: *in a week, for a month, in a hurry, for an hour, around an hour*, etc.

- xiv) With many transformation markers: *as a rule, take an example, as a result, etc.*
- xv) Before the Titles of Book: *A Guide to Correct English, An American Tragedy, A Modern English Grammar, and An Advance English Syntax . . . etc.*

### 2.2.3.2 Uses of the Definite Article

*The* is a weakened form of demonstrative forms *this* and *that*. It was found in Old English in the form *the* which meant a masculine demonstrative pronoun.

Hawkins (1991, p. 414) summarizes the overall function of the definite article: "*The*" conventionally implicates that there is some "subset of entities in the universe of discourse" that refers to is pragmatically delimited by the context of utterance, i.e. the mutual knowledge or shared beliefs between participants" (quoted by Bedmar and Papp 2008, p. 150).

According to Quirk et al. (1985, p. 265), as cited by Sedlatschek (2009, p. 204) "*The*" referring to something which can be identified uniquely in the contextual or general knowledge shared by speaker and hearer."

The definite article "*the*" can be used before singular and plural count nouns and before noncount nouns. In brief, the definite article may be used:

- i) Before a person or thing known or already referred to. "*The*" point out backward or previous reference that the person(s), thing(s), event (s) etc. already mentioned or being discussed – in context. For example: *I saw a car. The car was red.*
- ii) Before unique things or nouns like, *the sun, the P.M, the North Pole, the last war, the President, the earth, the church, and the sky, etc.*
- iii) to indicate some proper names:
  - a) Rivers, e.g. *the Ganga, the Nile, etc,*
  - b). Oceans and seas, e.g. *the Indian ocean, the Black sea, etc.,*
  - c) Canals, e.g. *the Suez Canal,*
  - d) Deserts, e.g. *the Sahara,*

- e) groups of islands, e.g. *the West Indies*,
- f) mountains ranges, e.g. *the Himalayas, the Alps*, etc.,
- g) Countries which include the words like 'republic' and 'kingdom', e.g. *the USA, the UK*, etc.
- iv) With the names of certain books. For example: *the Vedas, the Ramayana*, etc.
- v) Before Superlatives; like, *the darkest cloud, the best book*, etc.
- vi) With musical instruments; such as, *the flute, the piano*, etc.
- vii) Before Ordinals; e.g. *the first, the fourth*, etc.
- viii) Before the words like, *theatre/opera/pictures/movies/circus*, etc.
- ix) To refer to an adjective as a noun; e.g. *the rich, the poor*, etc.

### 2.2.3.3 Uses of Zero Article

According to Cowan (2008), zero articles refer to the absence of a definite or an indefinite article before a noun. There are several kinds of count and non count nouns which are not preceded by any article. This is referred to as zero article (symbolized as Ø). Zero article occurs with:

- i) **Non-count and plural count nouns:** In general sense, both concrete and abstract non-count nouns, and also plural count nouns are preceded by zero articles, for example, *wine, wood, history, lakes, literature, games, chess, long walk*, etc. (cited in Quirk et al. 1973: p.71).
- ii) **Common Nouns:** Articles are omitted before all those common nouns which are used in their institutional or general sense. These nouns normally include the following names:
  - **Institutions** For example: *to be in church/mass* (to pray), *hospital* (as a patient), *to go to school/class* (to study), etc.
  - **Modes of Transportation and Communication:** particularly preceded by the preposition 'by'. For example: *did you go or travel by plane/train/ taxi/bus*, etc. and *you can contact me by phone/ mail/ fax*, etc.

- **Meals or Familiar Nouns:** For example: *We have breakfast at eight in the morning.*

- **Certain Idiomatic Expressions:** Particularly prepositional phrases and transitive verb phrases.

For example:

Prepositional phrases	} <i>at home, at dinner, on earth, in jail, etc.</i>
Transitive verb phrases	
	<i>to catch fire, to send word, etc.</i>

- **Physical Ailments:** For example - *Cancer, Smallpox, Polio, Influenza, Appendicitis, etc.*
  - **Times of the Day and Night:** For example: *at dawn/ daybreak, before morning, after night, etc.*
  - **Parallel Structures:** For example: *face to face, hand in hand, etc.*
- iii) **Unique Reference:** These expressions include:
- **Proper Names:** These nouns consist of *particular persons* (Alexander), *places* (Delhi), *countries* (India), *months* (August), *days* (Monday), *holiday* (Christmas), *Magazines* (vogue), *personal names* (Dr. Watson, Lady Churchill), *calendar items* (as the names of festivals: Christmas Day, Easter Day), etc.
  - **Geographical Names:** Including *names of continents*: (North) America, *names of countries, states* (with premodifying adjective): (modern) Brazil, *cities and towns* (with premodifying word): (downtown) Boston, *names of single lake*: (Lake Eric) and *Mountain* (started with mount): (Mount Kilimanjaro), etc.
- iv) **Name + Common Noun:** For example: *Oxford Street, Baker Street, Charing Cross Road, Shaftesbury Avenue, and Leicester Square, etc.* (Quirk, et al 1973, p. 78-79).
- v) **Headlines and Signs:** Usually articles are omitted from headlines and signs of newspaper in order to save space, but interpretation may be inferred from the nouns. For example: *SLIPPERY WHEN WET!* (The road surface is slippery, when it is wet)

- vi) **Nouns following ‘kind of’:** *what kind of man is he?* (Not a kind of a man/hobby)

## 2.3 Description of English Prepositions

This is the last section of the second chapter. It gives an account of English prepositions in the light of its definition, types, functions, and meanings. It also describes the uses in terms of prepositions of time, place, and motion.

### 2.3.1 What are Prepositions?

Prepositions are part of a larger category of words, which is termed as *adposition*. This category consists of both prepositions and postpositions. As the term indicates, ‘a preposition is a word that usually comes before its complements.’ In English, prepositions have the tendency of subject + verb + object (SVO) while, postpositions have the structure of subject – object – verb (SOV). For example, languages like English, French, German, and other are *prepositional languages*; while on the other hand, Korean, Turkish, Finnish, and several others are *postpositional languages*. Streng (1972) explained that sixty simple, and twenty five compound prepositions commonly are used in English. Out of these only nine prepositions such as *at, by, for, from, in, of, on, to, and with*, illustrate about 90 percent of the actual occurrences of prepositions (cited in Hargis 2008, p. 59).

### 2.3.2 Definition of Preposition

The term preposition is defined differently by different linguists. Some of the most important definitions of preposition are as follows:

Essberger (2012, p. 5) states that the word “preposition” (pre + position) means “place before”. A preposition usually precedes another word, usually a noun or noun phrase:

- Noun,
- Pronoun,
- Noun phrase, and
- Gerund (verb in -ing form)

Curme (1935, p. 37) defines preposition as . . . *“a word that indicates a relation between the nouns or pronoun it governs and another word, which may be a verb, and adjective, or another noun or pronoun”* (cited in Wibbelt 1993, p. 113).

According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1973), *“a preposition expresses a relationship between two entities; one being represented by the prepositional complement of the various types of relational meaning, those of place and time are the most prominent and easy to identify”* (1973, p. 143).

Musliyanti (2012, p. 2) defines preposition as:

*“... a word that shows the relationship between two words in a sentence. Prepositions are always followed by nouns (or pronouns). They are connective words that show the relationship between the nouns following them and one of the basic sentences elements: subject, verb, object, or complement. They usually indicate relationship, such as position, place, direction, time, manner, agent, possession, and condition, between their objects and other parts of the sentence”* (quoted by Arjan, Hyati, Abdullah & Roslim 2013, p. 168).

### 2.3.3 Types of Preposition

Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) classified prepositions according to their form, function and meaning. They are as follows:

On the basis of **form** English prepositions can be classified into simple, complex and phrase prepositions:

- i) **Simple Prepositions:** These prepositions consist of a single word like, *on, in, by, of, off, out, till*, etc.
- ii) **Complex Prepositions:** These prepositions are formed by joining two/more words functioning like one-word prepositions. For example, *according to, out of, in spite of*, etc.

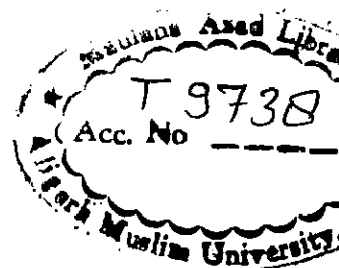


- iii) **Phrase Prepositions:** These prepositions are also called prepositional phrase. They occur in pairs as part of idiomatic constructions. For example: *in case of, compared with, by dint of, with regard to, etc.*

On the basis of their **functions** prepositions can be divided into, preposition for time (He will reach *at* eight o' clock), place (He lives *in* Delhi), direction (Mary went *to* library), agent (The room was cleaned *by* him), and instrument (She cut the apple *with* knife).

Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) classified prepositions on the basis of their **meaning** in terms of abstract and prototypes of prepositions. Prepositions are polysemous in nature. For example the preposition "*in*" has different meanings in the utterances below:

- a) Stephanie is *in* the room.
- b) The room *in* a mess
- c) Seth is *in* trouble
- d) *In* running out of the room, he knocked over the vase.
- e) He will be back *in* an hour.



The description of the above examples conveys a '*general notion of boundedness within an enclosure*'. In the first example, the enclosure is more literal, while more abstract, metaphorical, or extended in the rest examples (p. 404).

### 2.3.4 Functions of Preposition

The function of preposition is to connect nouns and noun-like constructions to other parts of the sentence. Because the description of all functions of preposition is not possible and this study particularly deals with time, place and motion therefore, illustration of preposition of time, place and motion is described as follows:

#### 2.3.4.1 Prepositions of Time

In the time sphere, there are only two dimension-types – point of time and period of time. Prepositions of time are: *about, after, before, during, between, near, through, until, from, around, beyond, at, throughout, within, on, by, since, in, to*, in which *at*,

*in*, and *on* are used very commonly in time phrase. The uses and functions of preposition of time are described in the following ways:

**Table: 2.1. Explanation and Example of Prepositions of Time**

Preposition	Explanation	Example
In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>months</li> <li>seasons</li> <li>time of day</li> <li>year</li> <li>After a certain period of time (when?)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I visited Italy in July</li> <li>we visited Agra in spring</li> <li>In the evenings, I like to relax</li> <li>I went to Delhi in 1994</li> <li>in an hour</li> </ul>
On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Days</li> <li>Dates</li> <li>weekend (AmE)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many shops don't open on Sundays</li> <li>Christmas is celebrated on 25 December</li> <li>What did you do on the weekend?</li> </ul>
At	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Night</li> <li>weekend (Br.E)</li> <li>acertain point of time(when?)</li> <li>for age</li> <li>an exact point of time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It gets cold at night.</li> <li>What did you do at the weekend?</li> <li>There's a meeting at half past ten this morning</li> <li>He learned English at the age of 5</li> <li>The class begins 7.30 am.</li> </ul>
For	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>over a certain period of time (past till now)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I'm just going to bed for an hour or so.</li> </ul>
Since	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>over a certain point of time (past until a later time/until now)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>England has not won the World Cup in football since 1966.</li> </ul>
From	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for the time when something starts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The museum is open from 9.30 to 6.00 Tuesday to Sunday.</li> </ul>
By	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not later than; at or before</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>She had promised to be back by five o'clock.</li> </ul>
Ago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>back in the past; back in time from the present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The dinosaurs died out 65 million years ago.</li> </ul>
Till/until	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>up to (the time that)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We waited till /until half past six for you.</li> </ul>

#### 2.3.4.2 Prepositions of Place

The prepositions that are used to describe a place or position of all types of nouns are called preposition of place. According to Dirven as cited by Celce-Murcia and

Larsen-Freeman (1999, p. 405) *at*, *on*, & *in* are the basic and most general prepositions of place. Euclid cited in Takahaski (1969) describes space as being three dimensional where a *point* (zero dimensions), a *line* (one dimension), a *plane* or *surface* (two dimensions) and a *solid* (three dimensional bodies). The uses and functions of these prepositions are given below:

**Table: 2.2. Explanation and Example of Prepositions of Place**

Preposition	Explanation	Example
At	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• next to, by an object to denote physical location</li> <li>• for events as location</li> <li>• place where you are to do something typical (watch a film, study, work)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at the corner, at the door, at the station, at the bus stop</li> <li>• at a concert, at the party,</li> <li>• at the cinema, at school, at work</li> </ul>
On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attaching to something</li> <li>• for a place located at a river side</li> <li>• being on a surface</li> <li>• for a certain side (left, right)</li> <li>• for being on a floor in a house</li> <li>• for public transport</li> <li>• for television, radio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The picture on the wall</li> <li>• Delhi lies on the Yamuna, London lies on the Thames.</li> <li>• On the desk, on the table</li> <li>• On the left, on the right</li> <li>• On the first floor, on the four floor</li> <li>• On the bus, on a plane</li> <li>• On TV, on the radio</li> </ul>
In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• room, building, street, town, country</li> <li>• book, paper etc.</li> <li>• car, taxi</li> <li>• picture, world</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the kitchen, in a building in London</li> <li>• In the book,</li> <li>• In the car, in a taxi</li> <li>• In the picture, in the world</li> </ul>
By/ beside, next to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• left or right of somebody or something</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jane is standing by/beside/next to the car.</li> </ul>
Under	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• on the ground, lower than (or covered by) something else</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cat is under the table</li> </ul>
Below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lower than something else but above ground</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fish are below the surface</li> </ul>
Over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• covered by something else</li> <li>• meaning more than</li> <li>• getting to the other side</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put a jacket over your shirt</li> <li>• Over 17 years of age</li> <li>• Walk over the bridge</li> <li>• Climb over the wall</li> </ul>
Above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• higher than something else, but not directly over it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A path above the lake</li> </ul>

### 2.3.4.3 Prepositions of Motion

Prepositions of motion show the direction of a noun including a person, place or thing in relation to another noun. A noun or pronoun is commonly preceded by a preposition like; *to*, *toward*, *into*, *onto* and frequently employs verbs of motion. The uses and functions of prepositions of motion are described in table 2.3.

**Table: 2.3. Explanation and Example of Prepositions of Motion**

Preposition	Explanation	Example
To	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• movement to person or building</li><li>• movement to a place or country</li><li>• go to bed</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• He goes to the cinema</li><li>• I go to London or Ireland</li><li>• she goes to bed</li></ul>
Into	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• enter a room / a building</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• He went into the kitchen / the house</li></ul>
Onto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• movement to the top of something</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The cat jumped onto the table</li></ul>
From	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• in the sense of from a standing point</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• He plucked a flower from the garden</li></ul>
Across	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• getting to the other side (also over) getting to the other side</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Walk across the bridge</li><li>• Swim across the river</li></ul>
Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• leaving a public transport vehicle</li><li>• separation from a supporting landmark</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• He got off the train, She went off the house</li><li>• The book fell off the table.</li></ul>
Out of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• leaving a car/taxi</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• He got out of the taxi</li></ul>
Towards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• movement in the direction of something (but not directly to it)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Go 5 steps towards the house</li></ul>
Through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• moving in one side and out of the other sides</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drive through the tunnel</li></ul>

# *Chapter-3*

## *Research Methodology*

### **3.1 Introduction of the Chapter**

This chapter describes methodology selected for the study in detail. An analytical study which is based on error analysis hypothesis is chosen for this research. The present research has been conducted on ESL learners perusing graduation at Aligarh Muslim University. The respondents belonged to the faculties of Arts, Social Sciences, Education, Science, and Theology only. The informants of the study answered the questions of test carefully. These students were linguistically skilled in English. All of them approved of the appropriateness of the test to examine the ESL learners' ability in using the grammar test, especially, the English articles and prepositions. Therefore, this chapter is going to describe the method of designing the research instrument which has been employed in conducting the research. It also highlights the procedure on the basis of which the analysis of the data has been conducted.

### **3.2 Designing of Research Instrument**

A questionnaire consisting of multiple choice questions and some other questions has been used as an instrument in this research. The questionnaire has been designed keeping in mind the objective of the study. The learners' performance was tested through controlled composition in the questionnaire and the students were asked to pick out the correct answers only from the given alternatives. The questionnaire was prepared to get predictable and expected errors in the use of articles and prepositions. This chapter, therefore, discusses how the whole survey was designed, carried out and analyzed. Hence, research design is explained in terms of the following subsections –

- Construction of the Questionnaire;
- Development of the questionnaire;
- Selection of the participants; and
- Collection of data

### **3.2.1 Construction of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire consisted of few questions related to the respondents' academic social and background and multiple choice questions. Multiple choice questions were prepared with the help of authentic textbooks of grammar for high school and intermediate classes and other relevant books. Furthermore, some questions were also adapted and spontaneously constructed. Linguistic terminologies and difficult words were avoided in the questionnaire in order to avoid confusions and problems in comprehension of those terms for the informants. After a thorough examination of the questionnaire, the survey was carried out.

### **3.2.2 Development of the Questionnaire**

The data for this study was obtained through students' questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section of the respondents' questionnaire comprised of ten questions (Section 1, item no. 1-11) which dealt with the social and academic background information of the participants. It was divided into two parts, the first part of the section was constructed in order to find out linguistic information of the participants while, the second part dealt with the participants' perception about English. Thus, the purpose of the whole section was to collect some personal information about the concerned participants such as name, age, class, year, main subject, gender, region/origin (rural/urban), their mother tongue (first language), medium of instruction in their previous school or college, and their perception, motivation and interest in English.

Section two (Item nos. 1-30) was designed to examine the participants' proficiency in English articles. This section consists of thirty multiple choice items which were divided into two parts: A & B. Part A (Item nos. 1-20) consists of twenty items with twenty blanks and the participants were asked to insert *a*, *an*, *the*, or  $\emptyset$ , where needed. Part B (Item nos. 21-30) comprised of ten items with or without the definite article *the* and the students were asked to choose the most appropriate option given in the alternatives.

Finally, the last section (Section 3, Item nos. 1-25) aimed at examining the informants' ability in using English prepositions. In this section, twenty five multiple choice items with selected prepositions were constructed. The Students were asked to fill in the blanks spaces with suitable prepositions in each question, choosing from a number of alternatives provided below in each question. The selected prepositions for this investigation are preposition of time, place and motion in which *in*, *on*, *at*, *to*, *into*, *onto*, *over*, *since*, *off* and *null* prepositions (no preposition is needed) are taken into account in this research.

### **3.2.3 Selection of the Participants**

First and second year undergraduate students of B.A, B. Sc and B.Com were selected for the sample of this analytical study. Both male and female participants were ESL learners of English. The sample comprised of the students from both the rural and the urban background. These advanced students were selected because they normally had a proficiency level and were expected to have command over English language and were, hence, capable of using English articles and prepositions correctly. For the study, 300 questionnaires were distributed randomly to the selected samples at Women's College and faculties of Arts, Social science; Commerce and Science of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) out of which 100 samples (which were completely and properly filled up) were used for the study.

### **3.2.4 Collection of Data**

In order to collect the data for this research, the survey was conducted in December 2013 at the department of English where undergraduate male students of various streams come for their compulsory English classes. Same survey was conducted in Women's College in January 2014, where undergraduate female students attend their compulsory English classes.

The participants of the present study were briefly explained the questions in questionnaire and were asked to respond to the test items as spontaneously as possible. The instruction was given in simple conversational English so that they can answer the questions appropriately. The participants were assured of anonymity and



confidentiality. The time allotted to complete the questionnaire was fifty minutes. As the questionnaire was divided into sections, the time was allotted to each section separately. Ten minutes were given for the first section i.e. personal and academic information. For the section two, that is, English articles, twenty minutes were allotted for both part A and B. Finally, for the section three that is, English prepositions, twenty minutes were allotted for twenty five questions. The data was thus collected for the present research.

### **3.3 Procedure of the Study**

Since 1960s, several error analysis (EA) procedures or models have been devised by several philosophers and researchers. Corder (1974) identified a model for error EA procedure in which he suggests three major stages in the analysis of errors. These are: recognition of errors description of errors and explanation of errors while, modifying this model, Gass and Selinker (1994) identified six steps in conducting an EA study which are:

- i) Collection of data: this is done with written data as well as oral (either from a 'free' composition by students on a given topic or from examination answers);
- ii) Identification of errors: nature of the error (labeling with varying degree of the exact nature of deviation, e.g. incorrect sequence of tenses, wrong verb form with plural subject, etc.);
- iii) Classification of errors (e.g. errors of agreement, articles, verb forms, etc.);
- iv) quantify errors: statement of relative frequency of error types (e.g. how many errors of agreement, articles, verb forms, etc occur);
- v) Analyze source (identification of the areas of difficulty in the target language); and

- vi) Remediate: based on the kind and frequency of an error type, pedagogical intervention like, remedial drills, lessons, etc., is carried out (p.103).

The present research is based on the Corder's model of procedure with a slight modification. The procedure of this study is described as follows:

### **3.3.1 Classification of Errors**

After collecting the errors, next significant stage in EA study is to classify the errors into different categories. The categorization of errors provides description of errors, like grammatical, lexical, and syntactical errors and so on. As far as this study is concerned, it describes articles and prepositions i.e. grammatical errors. According to Corder (1981), errors are classified into four categories: errors of omission of some required element; errors of addition where some item is present which should not be there; errors of selection where an incorrect element has been chosen instead of right one; and errors of disordering where the items presented are correct but their sequence is wrong.

In this research, the first three types of errors were recognized. The identified errors were modified and classified into three major categories: incorrect use, redundant use and omission of articles and prepositions in the questions provided in the questionnaire

### **3.3.2 Quantification of Errors**

This is also another important stage in EA study. The classified errors should be quantified in order to calculate the number of errors after the errors are gathered and put into concrete groups. The frequencies of errors lead to the identification of the learners' problems. And then judgments are made on items and domains which are regarded the most serious on the basis of percentage of the persistent errors. The quantification of error types with high frequency gives the perspective of learner's IL system. In this study, quantification was done using statistical package SPSS

20.0. The number of errors in each variable was fed into computer to get the frequency and percentage for each question of the questionnaire.

### **3.3.3 Presentation and Analysis of Errors**

An attempt has been made to present and analyze the identified errors in the current research. After gathering the samples of the learners and speculating the questionnaire one by one, a careful analysis was carried out. The types of errors in articles and prepositions were extracted and put under certain categories. This classification of errors enabled the researcher to find out the plausible errors' sources and causes. Besides, the explanation of the data, erroneous samples of the articles and prepositions were also provided in appendixes. The identified errors were classified into three distinct categories: incorrect use, redundant use and omission of articles and prepositions. Red color marker was used to highlight the errors. The analysis of errors in articles and prepositions was tabulated for each of the categories to obtain the concrete results of the pertaining errors. The analysis of the errors was done according to section-wise of the questionnaire.

### **3.3.4 Explanation and Interpretation of Errors**

Another important step in the analysis of errors is the explanation of the obtained erroneous forms. Explanation of errors is related to the illustration of why and how errors occurred. It is a discovery of finding out the causes and reasons why the learner has disregarded, broken, ignored or misused the conventions or rules of the target language. In this relation, observations of many studies suggest that there are many errors that can be traced back to MT. Due to a strong resemblance in that language, the learner tries to transfer one word for another. Such errors arising from the influence of learner's MT are termed as *transfer errors*. There are other examples of errors when the learner has discovered a correct rule but still he regularly commits errors as he has not yet explored the precise application of rule. Also, the learner can perform the deviant utterances like *he goed*, *he cans sing*. These types of errors are committed due to *overgeneralization* or due to lack of analogy. The analogical errors are supposed to be inherent and inevitable part of

language learning process. Some errors represent inefficiency in the learning-teaching process. Errors of this sort are termed as *teaching-induced error*.

In the present research, errors found in the use of articles and prepositions were explained in terms of analogical errors which occurred due to the lack of analogy, ignorance of rule restrictions, and incomplete application of rules, simplification and overgeneralizations and also mother tongue influence.

In explanation, interpretation of deviations is also a significant step in the analysis of errors. Description of errors depends on the interpretation of learner's dialect. Interpretation is made by comparing the learners' erroneous utterance with the original native speaker's utterance to interpret the cause of committed errors. Briefly, the whole description and explanation depends on the correct interpretation of the learners' erroneous performance.

According to Corder (1981), there are two ways of interpretation:

#### **3.3.4.1 Authoritative Interpretation**

If the learner is present at the time of data analysis, he is asked to tell what he intended in his mother tongue and then his sentence is translated into the target language, it provides an authoritative reconstruction of the learner's original (perhaps erroneous) utterance, Corder called it "*authoritative interpretation*" (1981, p. 37).

#### **3.3.4.2 Plausible Interpretation**

If the learner is not present for consultation, an attempt has to be made in order to interpret his utterance on the basis of its form and its linguistic and situational context, Corder called it "*Plausible interpretation*" (1981, p. 38).

As far as this research is concerned, the respondents were not present for consultation at the time of analysis; therefore an attempt has been made in order to interpret his/her performance on the basis of its form and its linguistic and situational context. Therefore, the plausible interpretation is adopted.

### **3.4 Conclusion of the Chapter**

The method and approach selected for this analytical study was adopted from Corder's (1974) model of error analysis procedure. The chapter has described technique of error analysis as classifying, quantifying, presenting and analyzing of errors. Finally, methods of explanation and interpretation of the errors have been discussed.

*Chapter-4*

*Presentation*  
*and*  
*Analysis of Data*

#### **4. Introduction of the Chapter**

The objective of this chapter is to present the analysis of the obtained data and bring out the findings of the study. Therefore, this chapter deals with:

- i) presentation of data (presentation of data in tabular and/graphic form);
- ii) analysis of the data (analysis of the findings in the light of questions provided in the questionnaires);
- iii) explanation of the sample (possible explanation of the causes of errors); and
- iv) interpretation of data (plausible interpretation of the errors and their causes).

The performance of ESL undergraduate students at AMU in the use of English articles and prepositions is analyzed here in detail. Out of 300 questionnaires (50 questionnaires for each faculty), only 100 were completely and properly filled up. Hence, only 100 samples were used for analysis of data. The obtained data was fed into the computer and analyzed by SPSS 20.0 Software. To generate descriptive statistics, frequencies were run on the software. The percentage for each question or variable was presented in tabular and/graphic form. This chapter discusses the sample of errors with a perspective to provide a possible explanation and interpretation of their causes. Data analysis of the questionnaire has been divided into three broad sections; the first section deals with the participants' linguistic and social background, the second section deals with analysis of English articles and the final section of the questionnaire is concerned with the analysis of English prepositions. The presentation of section-wise analysis of the questionnaire is given below.

##### **4.1 Analysis of the First Section of the Questionnaire (Section 1)**

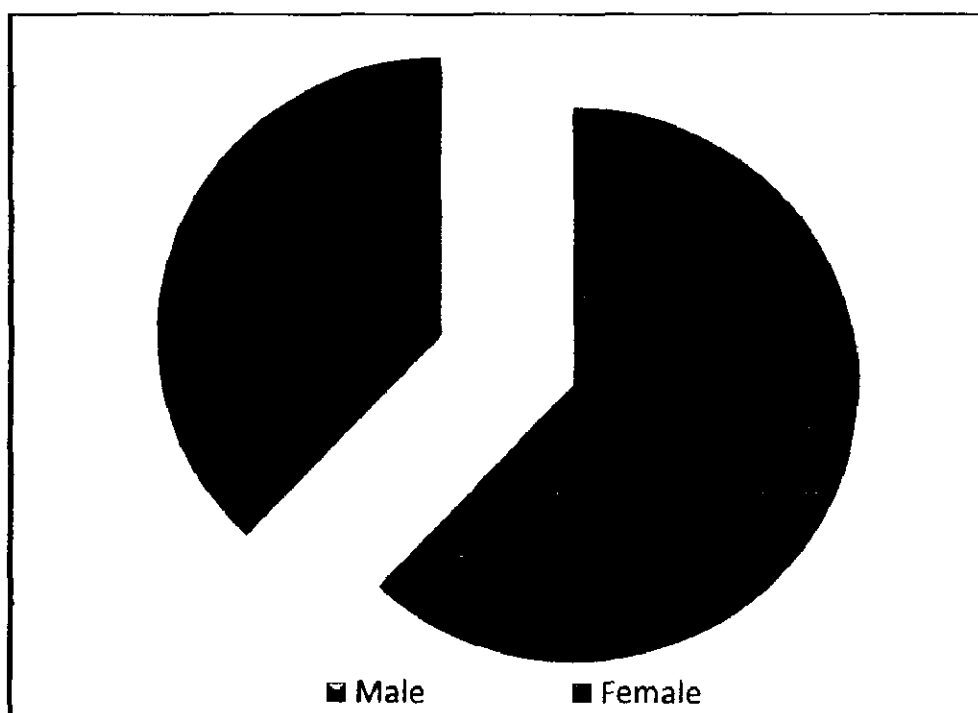
This section of the questionnaire is divided into two parts: personal information of the participants and participants' perception of proficiency in English. The analysis of this section can be described as follows –

#### **4.1.1 Personal Information of the Participants (Q 1-6)**

The first part of the first section deals with the personal information of the respondents. It had 6 questions which enquired the age, gender, origin, mother tongue of the students, and medium of instruction at the intermediate class and the respondents' starting age of learning English.

##### ***Gender, age and origin of the participants (Q 1to 3)***

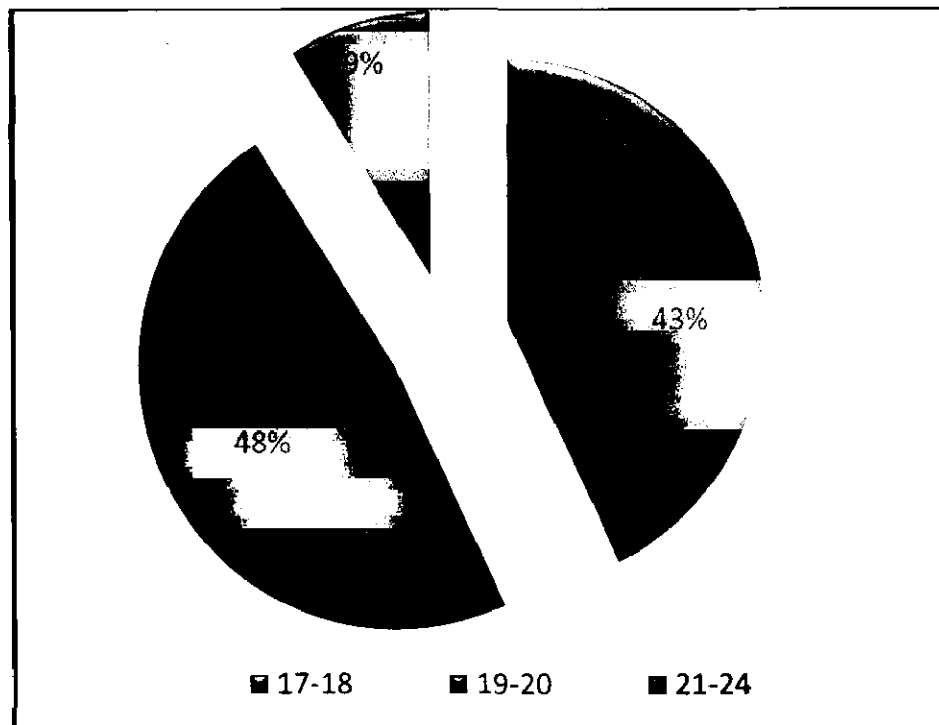
The first question investigated the gender of the respondents. Out of 100 participants, 62 were male and 38 female (as shown fig. 4.1).



***Fig.4.1. Gender of the participants***

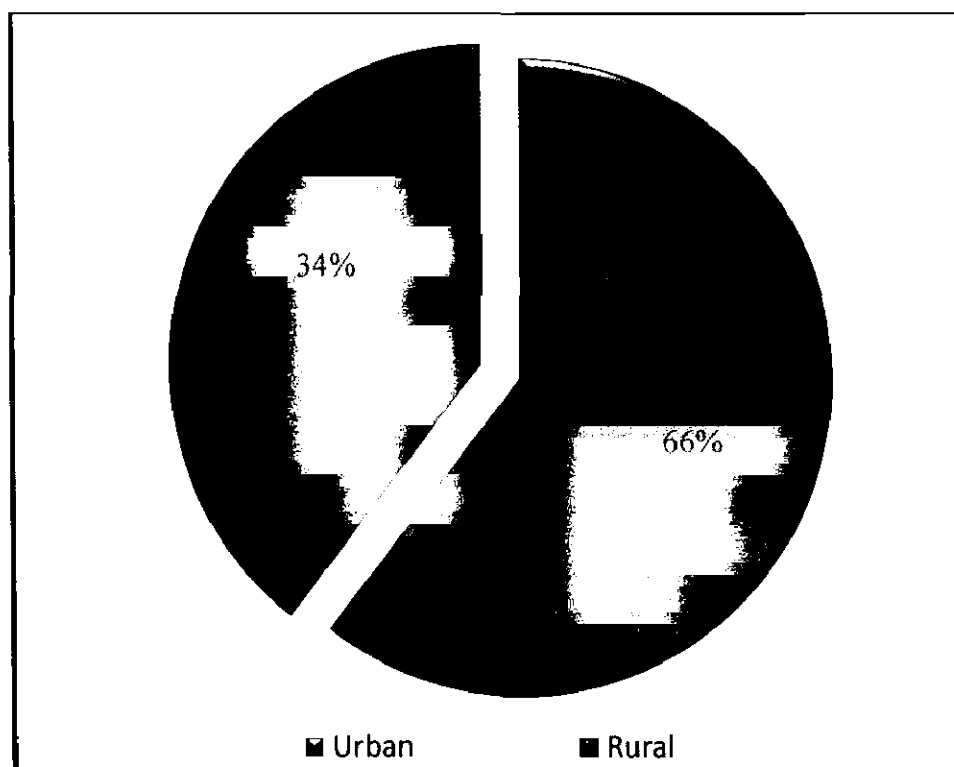
The second question enquired the age group of informants. All of the participants of the study belonged to different age groups ranging from 17-24 years. The data (as per fig. 4.2) revealed that 43% of the informants belonged to the age group of 17-18 years, 48% were in the age group 19-20 years and 9% were in the age group of 21-24 years.





*Fig: 4.2. Age group of the participants*

In relation to origin (question 3), the data shows that 66% informants were from urban areas while, 34% belonged to rural background as can be seen in figure 4.3.

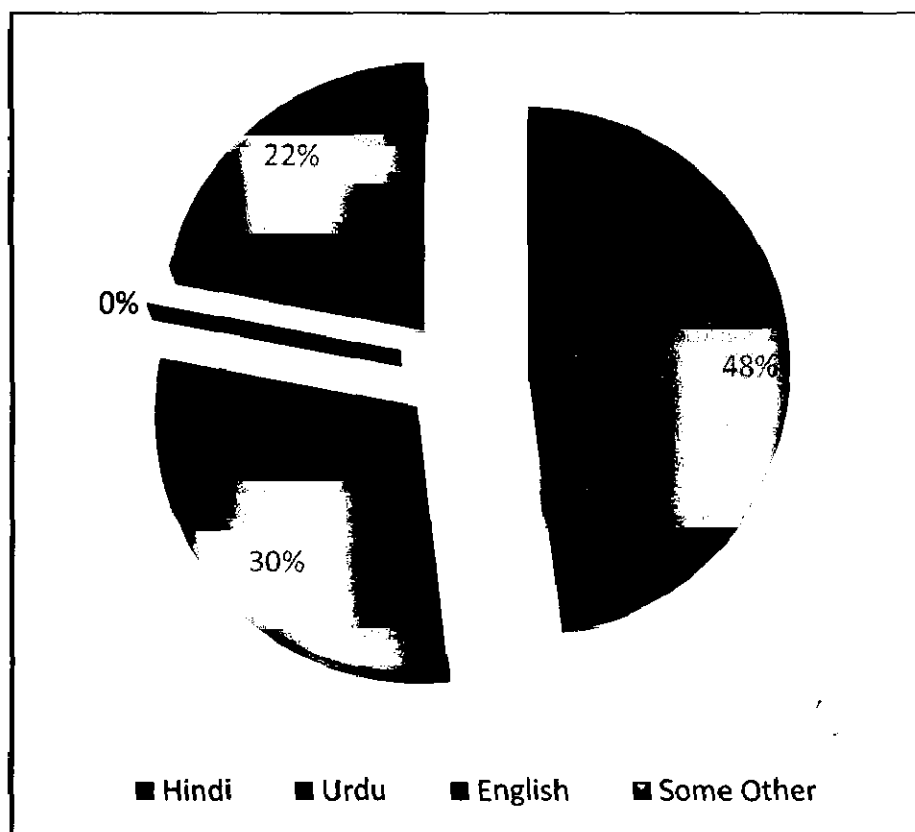


*Fig.4.3. Origin background of the participants*

It is a well known fact that the infrastructure for education in English medium is not yet properly developed in the rural areas. As a result, informants coming from rural areas lack exposure to English, not only in their personal and social life, but also in academics. Therefore, they face difficulties while speaking or writing English. It is noticeable that the number of students who come from urban areas is greater than participants who come from rural backgrounds. However, even they do not have command over English, due to which they are less proficient in using articles and prepositions appropriately. It can be considered that they might not have been instructed explicitly in grammar rules.

#### ***Mother tongue (MT) of the participants (Q 4)***

The result of the question number 4 that enquired the MT of the students reveals that most of the participants (48%) had Hindi as their MT. On the contrary, 30% of the sample had Urdu as their mother tongue and the remaining 22% had some other MT while, nobody opted for English as his/her MT.

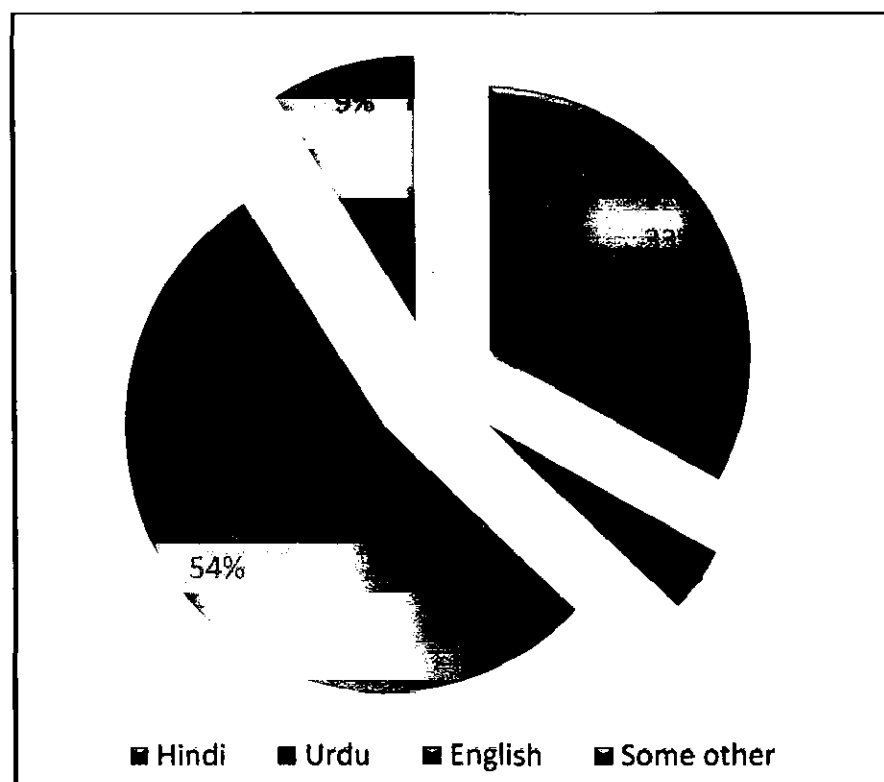


***Fig.4.4. Mother Tongue of the participants***

Since, each language has a different structure system; interference of mother tongue in the second language learning becomes an important phenomenon. Besides English, other languages either lack articles and prepositions or employ other words or morphemes which are used in different ways. Therefore, it can be considered that the participants' mother tongue influences target language performance.

#### ***Medium of instruction (MI) (Q5)***

Question 5 investigated the medium of instruction at the intermediate level of education of the respondents. The data revealed that 54% of the informants had English, 33% had Hindi, while 4% opted Urdu and the rest 9% students had some other languages as the medium of instruction at their intermediate level. Fig. 4.5 indicates the percentage representation of this question.

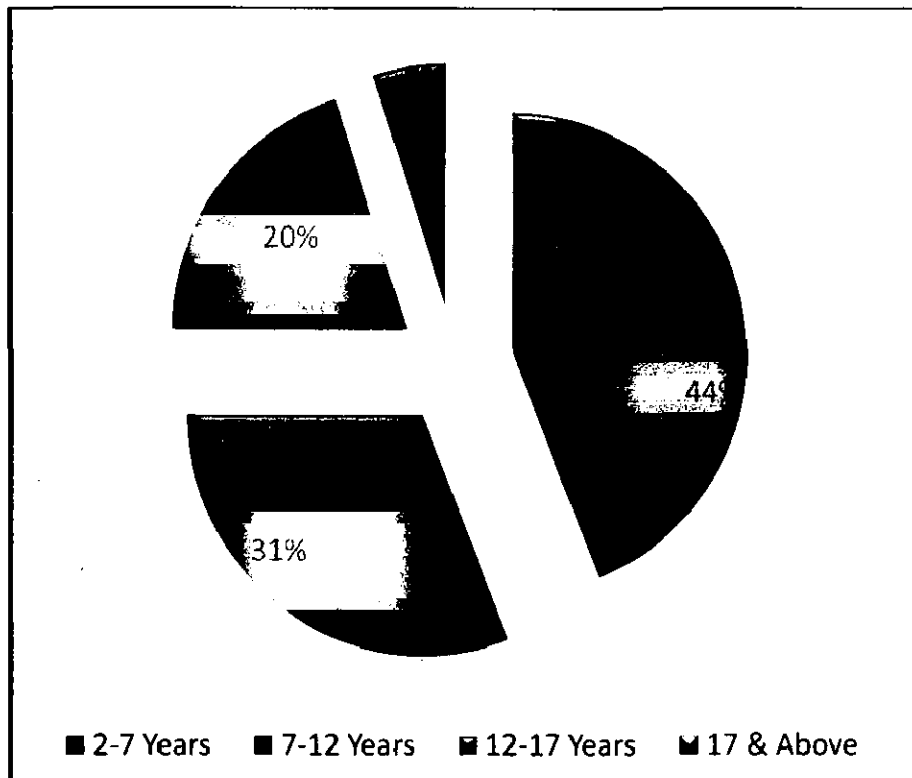


***Fig.4.5. Medium of instruction of the participants***

It is evident from the result that a great majority of participants had English as the medium of instruction at the intermediate level yet, they were not competent in English. It may be that they could not have efficient practice or they ignored the rules of the target language.

### ***At what age did you start learning English?***

Question number 6 investigated to know the age at which the respondents started to learn English. Fig. 4.6 reveals that 44% students began to learn English in the age group of 2-7 years and 31% participants started in the age group of 7-12. The data shows that there is only 25% of the population who began to learn English at the age of 17 years and above.



***Fig.4.6. Age at which participants started to learn English***

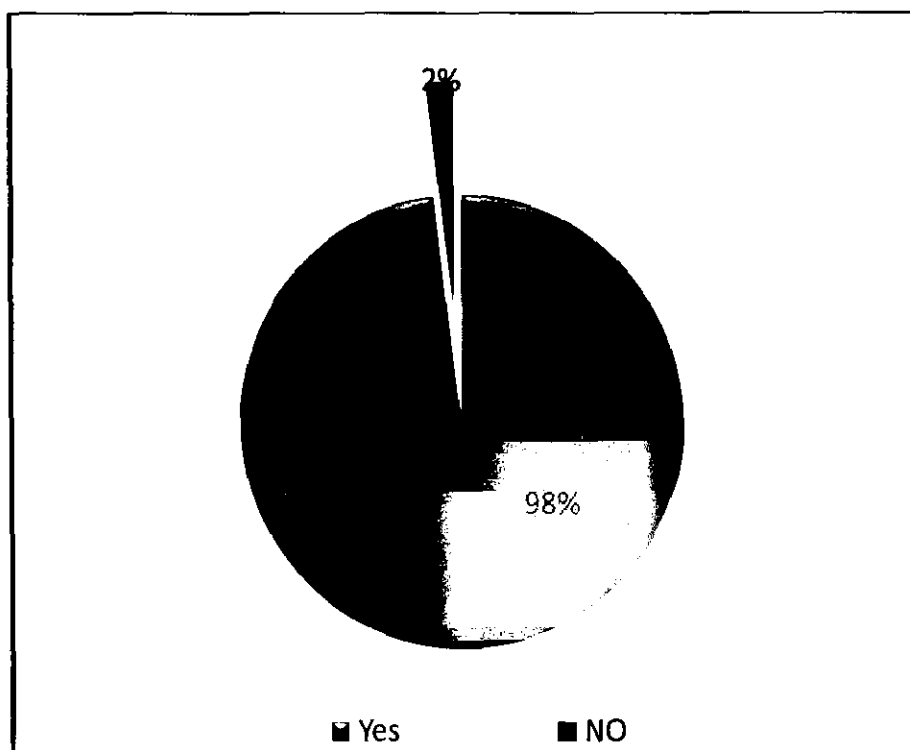
It is noteworthy that a large portion of the sample began to learn English at the age of 2-7 years but they did not acquire their target language efficiently. The reason may be the careless attitude towards the target language which leads them to poor performance.

#### **4.1.2 Participants' Perception of Proficiency in English (Q 7-11)**

The second part of the first section deals with the participants' perception of proficiency in English. It consisted of 5 (7-11) questions regarding the respondents' interest in English, their desire to learn English, their interest in English grammar classes and participants' perception about the importance of grammar.

### ***Are you interested in learning English?***

Question number 7 enquired the participants' interest in English. It has been observed that 98% respondents are interested in learning English. Only 2% students are not interested in this area.

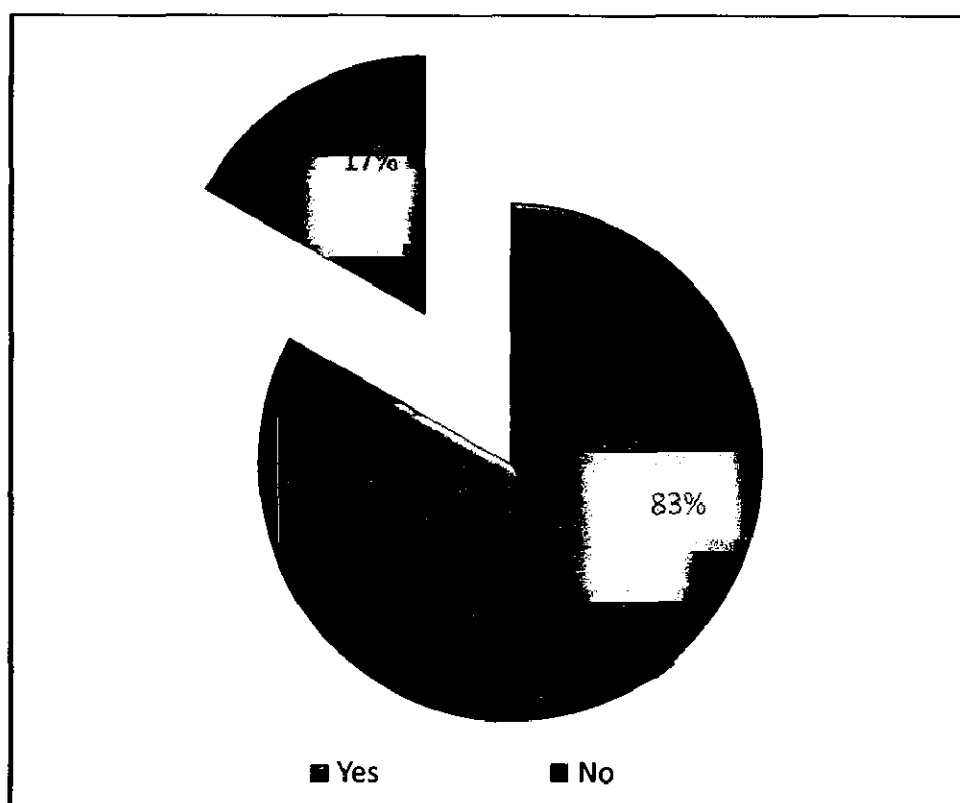


***Fig.4.7. Participants' interest in English***

It is evident from the result (as shown in fig. 4.7) that a great majority of population is eager to learn English yet they are unable to perform appropriately in this language. The same can be observed in later sections which deal with analysis of English articles and prepositions. The reason can be that they might be interested in reading, and not in writing.

### ***Do you find English grammar classes interesting?***

According to response of question number 8 (as per fig. 4.8), 83% respondents admitted that they find English grammar classes interesting while, 17% of the population claimed that they do not.

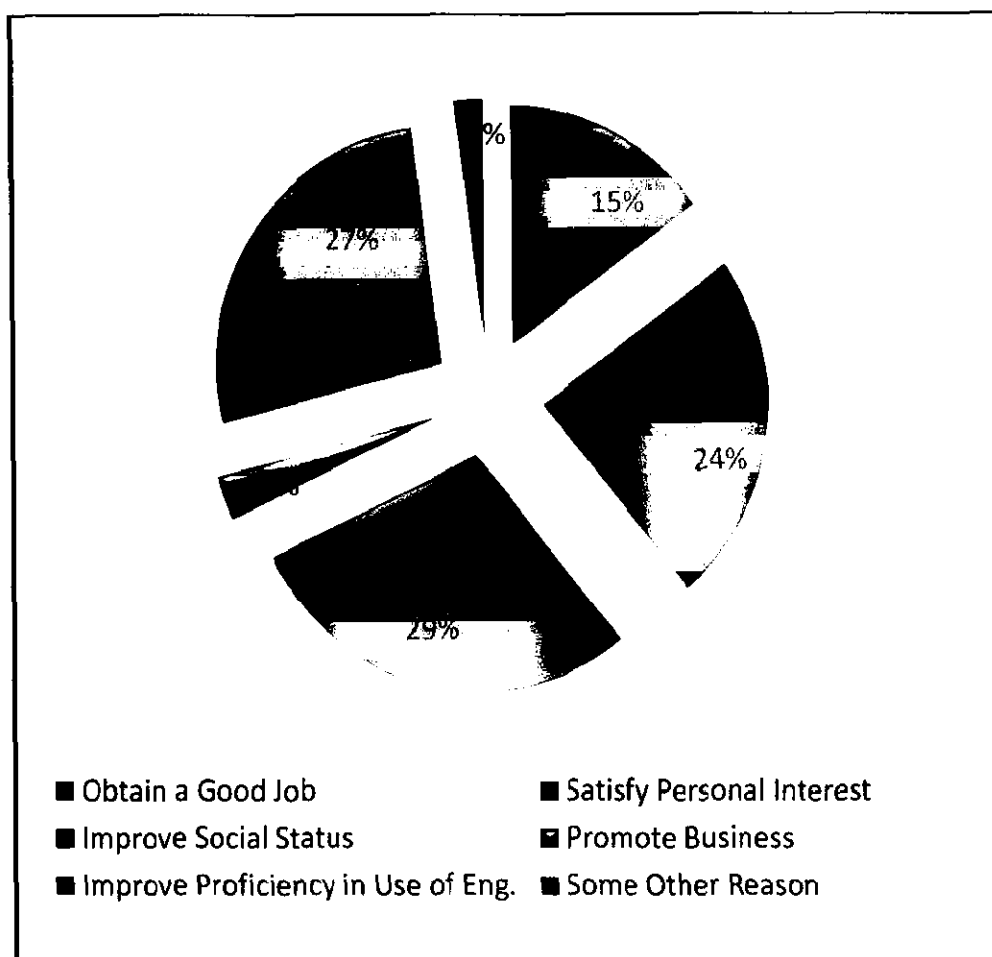


***Fig.4.8. Participants' interest in English grammar classes***

On the basis of analysis of this survey, it can be concluded that although a large number of respondents find grammar classes interesting yet, they could not show good performance. It can be attributed to their lack of practice in the target language or to the extensive use of MT.

#### ***Why do you want to learn English?***

The purpose of the Question number 9 was to know the participants' desire to learn English. It was found (as shown in fig. 4.9) that 29% of the respondents wanted to learn English in order to improve their social status while, 27% students said that they wanted to improve their proficiency level. The other 24% of the sample was eager to learn English in order to satisfy their personal interest. The data revealed that there is only 5% of the population who claimed that they want to learn English only to promote their business and for some other reasons.

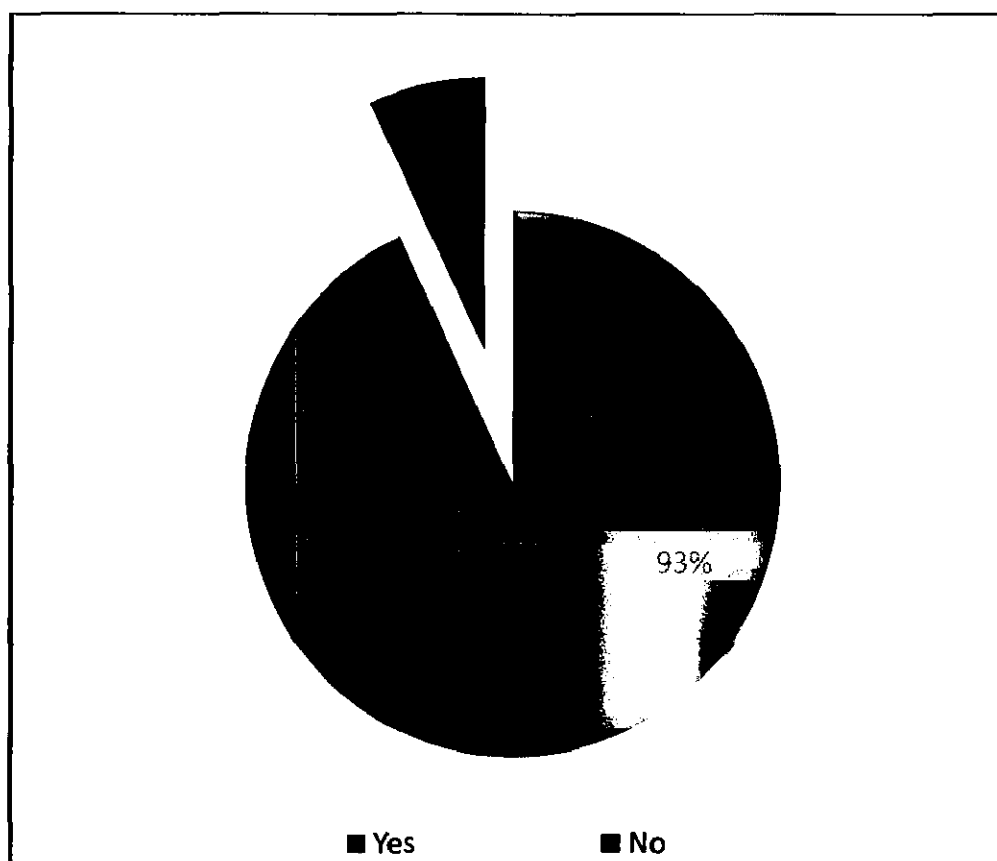


***Fig.4.9.Why do participants want to learn English?***

Result shows that a good number of students wanted to learn English in order to improve their social status and proficiency level in English. However, the survey revealed that respondents were not able to use articles and prepositions accurately. As a result, their scripts were quite unintelligible. It may be considered that perhaps they might not have had good access to learn English or the teaching method can also be blamed due to which they could not find their goals.

***Do you think grammar is important for learning English?***

Question 10 investigated the participants' opinion on whether grammar is important for learning English or not. The responses that the data obtained reveal that 93% of the respondents accepted the importance of grammar for learning English. On the contrary, only 7% participants responded negatively. The result is indicated in fig.4.10.



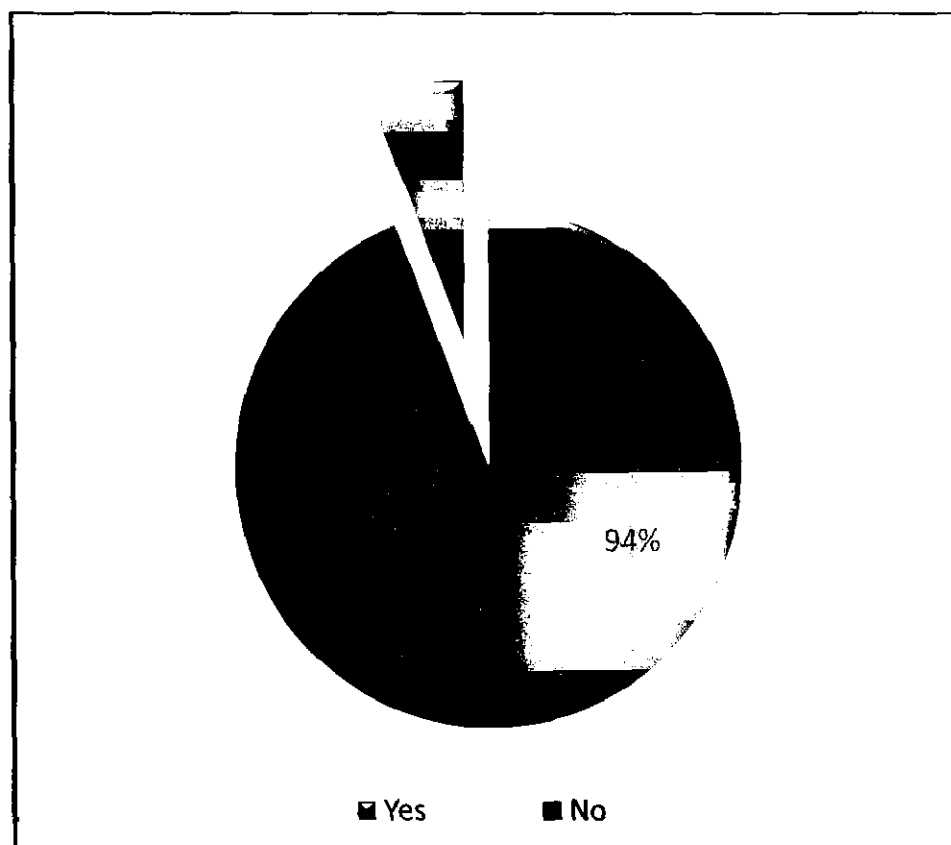
***Fig.4.10. Participants' perception about the importance of grammar***

Evidently, the result reveals (as fig. 4.10) that a great majority of students believed that grammar is necessary for increasing intelligence in English. However, they failed to perform well. This may be due to the learner's carelessness or inadequate teaching methodology in their schools.

***Do you think your command over grammar can help you improve your communication skills in English?***

This is the last question of this section. Question number 11 is somewhat similar to the 10. It enquired the respondents' views on whether they believe that their command over grammar can help them in improving their communication skills in English. The statistical result for this enquiry reveals (as per the fig. 4.11) that a great quantity of the sample (i.e. 94%) admitted this perspective. On the contrary, 6% students showed disagreement with this view.



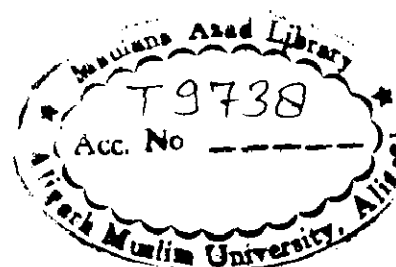


***Fig. 4.11. Participants' opinion about the improvement in English through grammar***

It is obvious from the result (as revealed in figure 4.11) that a large proportion of sample has the opinion that command over grammar can help in improving communicative proficiency in English. Yet, they have not command over English. Consequently, it can be said that students avoid the terms they feel difficult.

#### **4.2 The Analysis of the Second Section of the Questionnaire (Section 2)**

This section of the questionnaire attempts the analysis of errors committed by the participants of the study in the use of English articles. It consisted of 30 multiple choice questions which were given to the respondents in order to check their knowledge of articles. Here, a gap was left out in each sentence for the definite, indefinite or zero article. The participants were instructed to fill in the gaps on the basis of their understanding of articles.

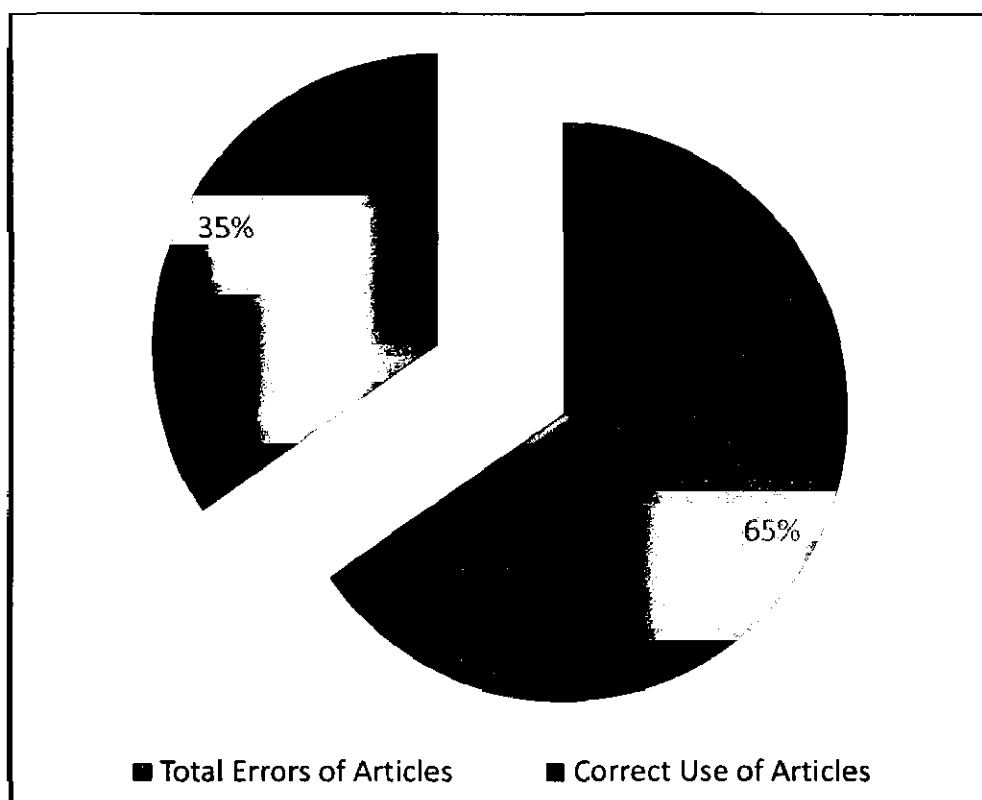


### 4.2.1 Types of Errors

The analysis of data (as per fig. 4.12 and table 4.1) reveals that the participants of this research made a high frequency of errors in the use of articles. In the present study three error tendencies in the writing of the respondents were identified. Classification of the identified errors can be categorized into the following categories:

- Incorrect use of articles;
- Redundant use of articles; and
- Omission of articles.

The total numbers of errors -1960- out of 3,000 (total number of gaps in each questionnaire multiplied by total number of respondents, i.e. 30 gaps  $\times$  100 number of respondents = 3,000) have been discovered in all three error categories (i.e. incorrect use, redundant use and omission of articles). They constitute 65.33% (i.e. 65%) of the total errors while, the rest, 34.67% (i.e. 35) exhibited knowledge of correct use of articles as shown in figure 4.12.

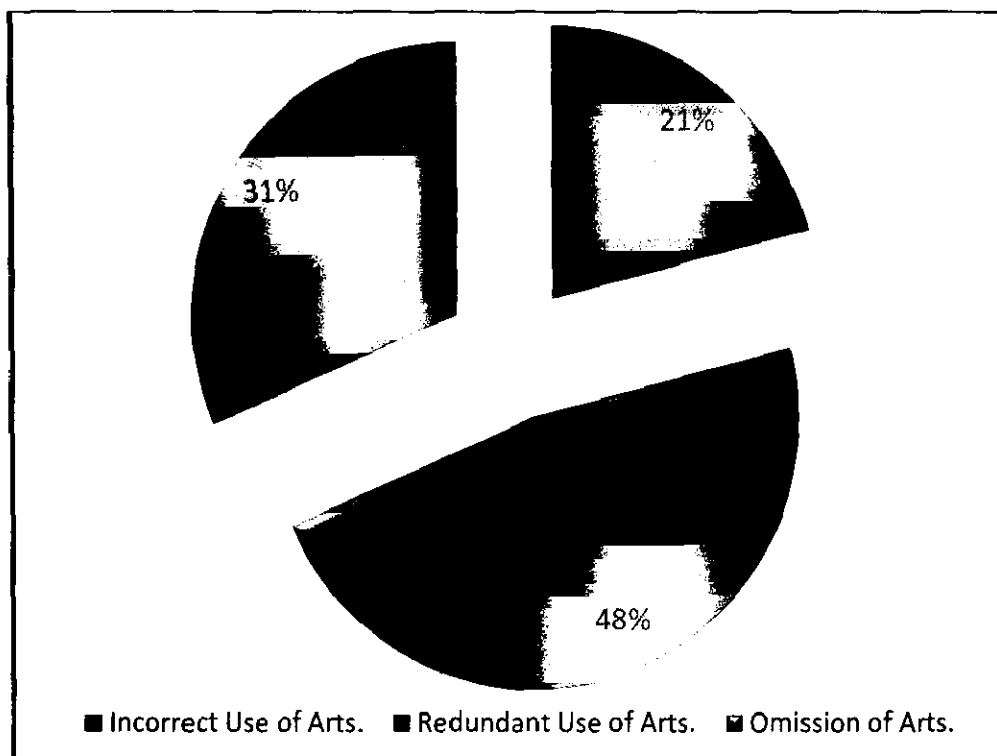


*Fig. 4.12. Percentage of errors & correct use of articles*

All error tendencies can be shown in table 4.1 and figure 4.13 as follows:

**Table: 4.1.Errors & related frequency of articles in all categories**

Areas of Errors	Frequency	Percentage (approximate)
Incorrect use of Articles	410	20.91
Redundant use of Articles	932	47.55
Omission of Articles	618	31.53
<b>Total</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>100.0</b>



**Fig. 4.13 Percentage of errors of articles in all categories**

The description and explanation of all errors found in the use of articles can be discussed in detail in the following ways:

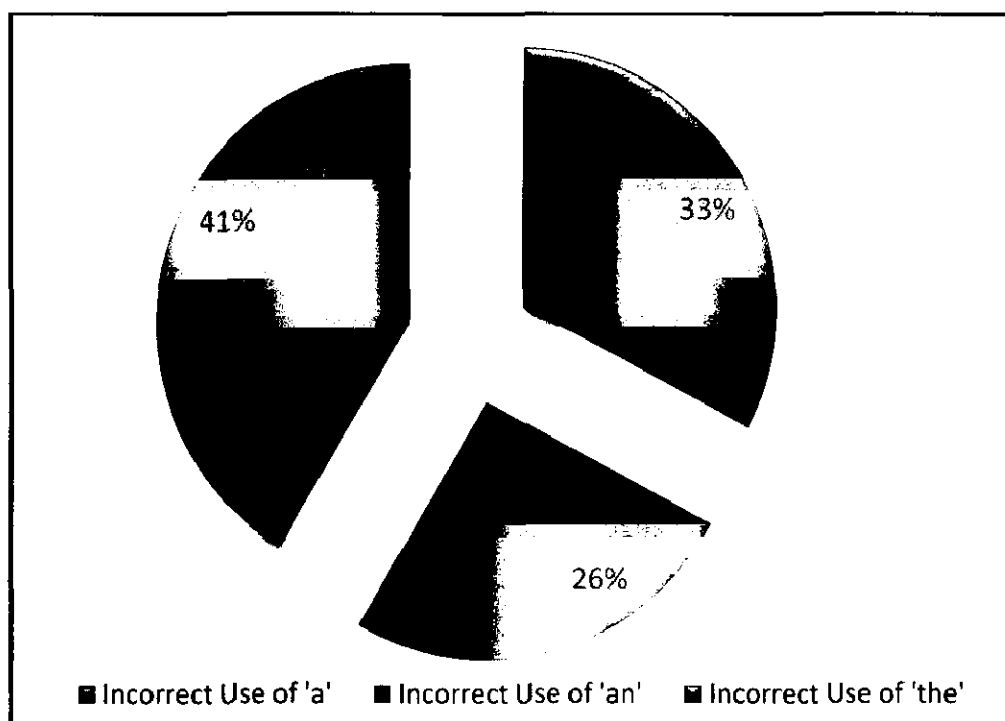
#### **4.2.1.1 Incorrect Use of Articles**

It has been observed that learners are often confused in the use of articles in certain contexts. In such situations they try to apply rules where they are not applicable. In

the present study, it was found that respondents committed errors due to their confusion in the use of articles. The total number of errors that fall in the category of *incorrect use of articles* is calculated as: 410, the total percentage of which is 20.91 % as per table 4.1. The description of incorrect use of articles pertaining to *a/an* and *the* can be discussed as follows:

**Table: 4.2. Errors & related frequency of incorrect use of articles**

Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage (approximate)
Incorrect use of <i>a</i>	134	32.68
Incorrect use of <i>an</i>	106	25.85
Incorrect use of <i>the</i>	170	41.46
<b>Total</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>100.0</b>



**Fig. 4.14. Percentage of incorrect use of articles**

The analysis (as per fig. 4.14) reveals that the respondents made 41% incorrect use of *the* and 33% incorrect use of *a* while, they made 26% errors in the incorrect use of *an*. Thus, articles are used incorrectly in the following situations:

- Incorrect use of *the* in place of *a/an*
- Incorrect use of *a/an* in place of *the*
- Incorrect use of *an* in place of *a*
- Incorrect use of *a* in place of *an*

#### **4.2.1.1.1 Incorrect use of “the” in place of “a/an”**

1. I bought \*the new car yesterday. The car is blue.
2. What \*the beautiful scene this is!
3. He is \*the smart boy.
4. In \*the urban area I saw a one-eyed man.
5. Ceylon is \*the Island.
6. He is \*the honest person.

Respondents employed the incorrect use of *the* instead of *a* in the indefinite context, where a noun was introduced for the first time (i.e. first mention of anaphoric reference), with a singular countable noun and a noun preceded by an adjective that ends with an exclamation mark in sentences number 1 to 3 given above. Moreover, they used *the* in place of *an* before the word starting with a *vowel sound* in the examples number 4 and 5 given above.

The respondents also did not seem to have the knowledge of the usage of *an* before a word starting with a silent *h*. Therefore, they employed incorrectly *the* instead of *an* in example number 6 shown above. It might be possible to conclude that these types of errors could occur due to the ignorance of rule restrictions, where learners fail to use rule restrictions of existing structures in the target language.

#### **4.2.1.1.2 Incorrect use of “a/an” in place of “the”**

7. I bought a new car yesterday. \*A car is blue.
8. \*A World is a stage where the director is God.
9. \*A Ramayana is a famous epic.
10. \*A Book you want is out of print.
11. Bombay is \*a biggest city of India.

12. I bought a new car yesterday. \*An car is blue.
13. \*An World is a stage where the director is God.
14. \*An Ramayana is a famous epic.
15. \*A Book you want is out of print.
16. Bombay is \*an biggest city of India.

Informants made errors in using *a/an* instead of *the* with the second mention of anaphoric reference, before a unique noun, the name of a holy book, a specific book, and with a superlative adjective in the examples number 7 to 16 provided above.

It can be considered that once the learner recognized the fact that English requires use of 'one' with singular unidentified countable nouns, this may lead them to overgeneralize the rule to instances where it is not applicable. Analogy or overgeneralization of other target language structures could be offered to explain these errors. Therefore, the respondents applied rules of indefiniteness where it was not applicable.

#### **4.2.1.1.3 Incorrect use of "an" in place of "a"**

1. He is \*an smart boy.
2. Do not make \*an noise.
3. His father is \*an veterinarian

#### **4.2.1.1.4 Incorrect use of "a" in place of "an"**

4. In \*a urban area I saw a one-eyed man.
5. Ceylon is \*a Island.
6. He is \*a honest person.

As a rule, indefinite article *a/an* is used in its original numerical sense of *one* in which *a* is used before a word starting with a consonant sound while, *an* is used before a word starting with a vowel sound. But the subjects of the present study could not differentiate between a vowel and a consonant sound. In this way, they incorrectly used *an* instead of *a* before a word starting with a consonant sound in sentences number 1 to 3 and *a* in place of *an* before the word starting with a vowel

sound in examples number 4 and 5 given above. The respondents do not also seem to have the knowledge of usage of *an* before a word starting with a mute/silent *h* even. This is why they employed incorrect *a* instead of *an* before words starting with the silent *h* as mentioned earlier in statement number 6.

There are three possibilities of these errors occurring (i) this type of erroneous performance seems to be a mistake or a slip of pen, or one which is caused by learners' carelessness, exhaustion or lack of attention. It has been found that learners usually correct this types of error themselves once their attention is drawn to it. (ii) It can also be explained in terms of poor learning as they failed to learn when to use the indefinite articles and *an*. (iii) Poor teaching can also be one reason because if the students would have been taught explicit use of indefinite and the definite article in their schools, they would not have made such errors. Therefore, these errors can be said to have occurred due to learner's ignorance of rules, poor learning and teaching induced errors.

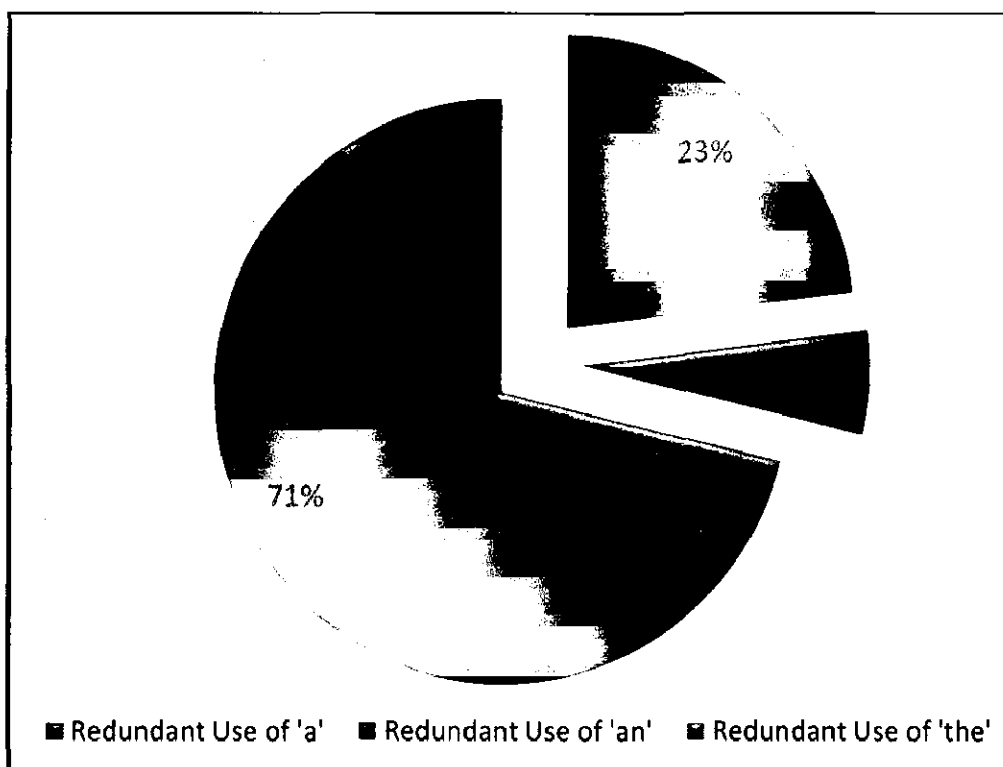
#### 4.2.1.2 Redundant Use of Articles

The term redundant is used in the sense of addition or unnecessary insertion of articles. The data also shows that respondents of this study made errors by making *redundant use of articles*. They inserted *a/an* and *the* incorrectly in place of zero articles  $\emptyset$  in the context where it was not required at all. The greatest number of errors i.e. 932-out of 1960, which constitutes 47.55 % (as per table 4.1) was found in this category.

The percentage for each variable is given in table 4.3 and figure 4.15.

**Table: 4.3. Errors & related frequency of redundant use of articles**

Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage (approximate)
Redundant Use of <i>a</i>	215	23.06
Redundant Use of <i>an</i>	53	5.68
Redundant Use of <i>the</i>	664	71.24
<b>Sum</b>	932	100.0



***Fig. 4.15. Percentage of redundant use of articles***

According to analysis of the data (as shown figure 4.15), respondents made 71% redundant use of *the* and 23% redundant use of *a* while, they made 6% errors in the redundant use of *an*. Thus, subjects of this study inserted articles *a/an* and *the* in the following contexts:

- Before abstract non count nouns;
- Before material and physical substance;
- Before the second adjective of the same noun;
- Before the name of institutions;
- Before a common noun used in its widest sense;
- Before the term 'society', 'language'; and
- Before 'plural' & 'proper noun in general sense.

The respondents wrongly replaced *a/an* and *the* with Ø before abstract non-count nouns in examples number 1 to 6, material and physical substance in sentences number 7 to 12, before a common noun used in its widest sense in examples number 13 to 15, with the second adjective of the same noun in sentences number 16 to 18,



before the name of an institution used in a general sense in sentences number 19 to 21 and with the term 'society', 'language', 'countable plural' & 'proper noun in general sense in examples number 22 to 25. They are illustrated below:

#### ***4.2.1.2.1 Before Abstract Non-Count Nouns***

1. \*A Virtue is its own reward.
2. \*An Virtue is its own reward.
3. \*The Virtue is its own reward.
4. \*A Intelligence is difficult to measure.
5. \*An Intelligence is difficult to measure.
6. \*The Intelligence is difficult to measure.

Generally articles are not used before abstract nouns in common sense but the respondents of this study made errors by using unnecessary articles in such contexts in sentences number 1 to 6 given above. These types of errors can occur due to ignorance of rules, or wrong generalizations. Therefore, overgeneralization could be one of the reasons for this type of errors.

#### ***4.2.1.2.2 Before Material Nouns and Physical Substance***

7. \*A Calcium is useful for the bones.
8. \*An Calcium is useful for the bones
9. \*The Calcium is useful for the bones.
10. \*A Iron is a useful metal.
11. \*An Iron is a useful metal.
12. \*The Iron is a useful metal.

Commonly used material nouns and physical substance do not take any article but the respondents made errors by using unnecessary articles in the examples number 7 to 12 given above.

#### **4.2.1.2.3 Before a Common Noun used in its Widest Sense**

13. \*A Man is mortal.
14. \*An Man is mortal.
15. \*The Man is mortal.

‘Man’ and ‘woman’ are not preceded by an article when they are used in individual or generic sense. But the respondents made errors by using redundant insertion of articles before the word ‘man’ used in general sense in sentences number 13 to 15 shown above. It has been found that most languages employed the definite article ‘the’ in generic plural nouns, in mass nouns, and nouns used in the widest sense. Therefore, it can be considered that the learners’ mother tongue interference causes the problems as mentioned in the statements number 7 to 15 in the subsections 4.2.1.2.2 and 4.2.1.2.3.

#### **4.2.1.2.4 Before the Second Adjective of the Same Noun**

16. Iqbal was a poet and \*a philosopher.
17. Iqbal was a poet and \*an philosopher.
18. Iqbal was a poet and \*the philosopher

When two or more descriptive adjectives qualifying the same nouns are connected by ‘and’, the article is used only before the first adjective. But respondents made errors by inserting the articles *a* or *an* and *the* before the second adjective of the same noun in sentences number 16 to 18 given above. This may be due to incomplete knowledge of the rules of the target language.

#### **4.2.1.2.5 Before the name of an Institution**

19. John goes to \*a school daily.
20. John goes to \*an school daily.
21. John goes to \*the school daily.

As per the rule, articles are not used with a building or institution name, but the learners made a mistake here also. Therefore, sentences number 19 to 21 shown above are erroneous in two ways. Firstly, common nouns do not take any article when they are used in their institutional sense or primary purpose. Secondly, the preposition *to* with ‘events/places’ after the ‘verb of motion’, usually omits articles. In this relation Quirk et al. (1985) cited in Al- Fotih (2003) suggest that verbs like *go* with prepositions take zero articles (p.165). In this way, exceptions to rules in the target language create problems due to which learners got confused in applying appropriate use of articles. Inadequate teaching procedure is also responsible for these types of mistakes.

#### ***4.2.1.2.6 Before the terms ‘Society’, and ‘Language’***

22. One of my aims is to contribute to \*the society in some ways.

23. It is not easy to be fluent in \*the English.

No article is used before the word ‘society’ because it is a very general term. The definite article *the* is used before the word ‘community’ as it refers to a particular *group of entity*. But most informants chose the incorrect option with the definite article before the word ‘society’ in sentence number 22 given above. “*The*” is also not used in the phrase ‘in English’, but *the* is used in ‘the English language’. However, the informants failed to choose the correct option and they put the redundant article *the* before the phrase ‘in English’ in the example number 23 given above.

#### ***4.2.1.2.7 Before Plural and Proper noun in general sense***

24. \*The computers are available nowadays.

25. \*The Mount Everest is one of the peaks of the Himalayas.

The respondents do not seem to have an idea that plural nouns when used in common sense, do not have the definite article. Due to this ignorance, they chose the incorrect option and made redundant use of *the* instead of zero article in example number 24 provided above.

Furthermore, the name of a Single Mountain that starts with *Mount* usually omits articles. But most informants chose the definite article before the said noun in sentence number 25 given above which is incorrect.

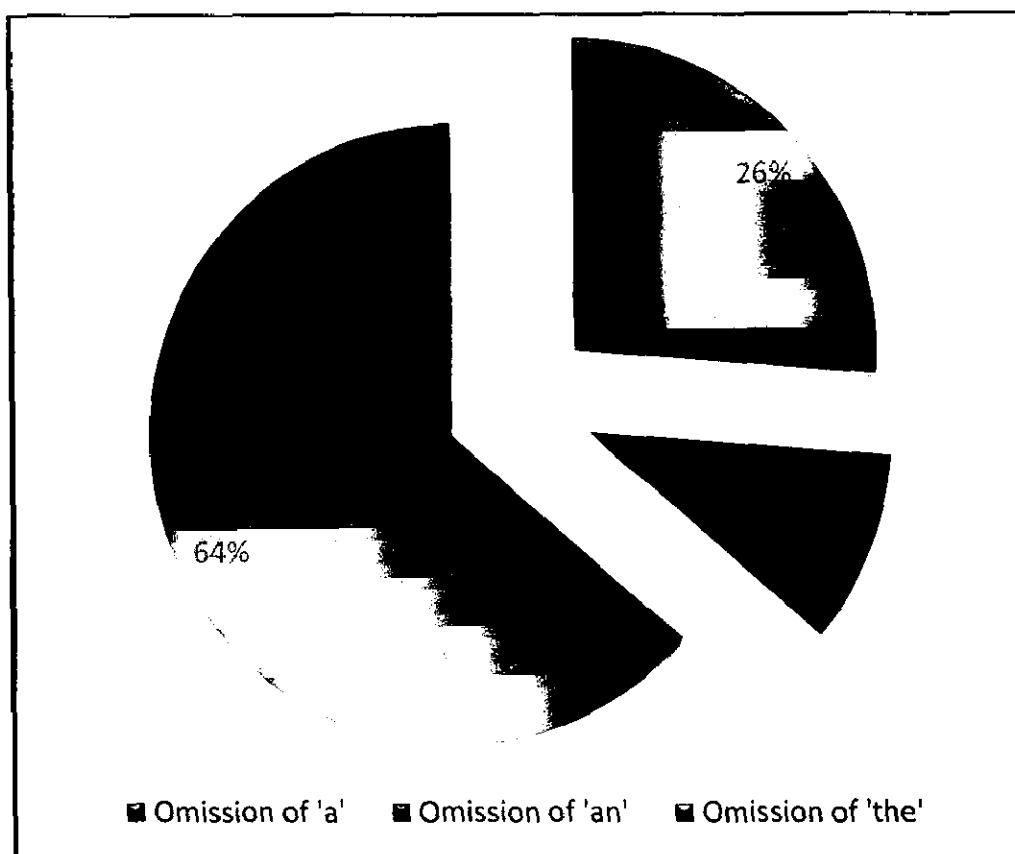
Hypercorrection may be one of the plausible reasons for these types of errors (in examples 22-25) as learners are afraid of making errors. Because they are so often corrected when they drop the article, learners occasionally overuse the article to avoid making the error. Besides, exceptions of the rules may also be another plausible reason for making these errors.

#### 4.2.1.3 Omission of Articles

The omission of article refers to the absence or deletion of articles in the context where they are needed. They are called zero/null articles. Researchers often called it as overuse of zero article and underuse of indefinite *a/an* and the definite article *the*. The analysis of data reveals that the informants of the study not only made errors by using redundant articles but they also made errors by omitting articles i.e. replacing  $\emptyset$  with *a/an*, *the* in the context where their use was necessary. The total number of errors in this category was found to be 618-out of 1960 which makes 31.53% as indicated in table 4.1. The percentage for each variable is given in table 4.4 and figure 4.16.

**Table: 4.4. Errors & related frequency of omission of articles**

Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage (%) (approximate)
Omission of <i>a</i>	162	26.21
Omission of <i>an</i>	062	10.03
Omission of <i>the</i>	394	63.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>100.0</b>



**Fig.4.16. Percentage of omission of articles**

The analysis reveals that the participants of the study omitted both the indefinite *a/an* and definite article *the* in the questionnaire, the explanation and interpretation of which is described as follows:

#### **4.2.1.3.1 Omission of the Indefinite Article “a/an”**

The total number of omission of the indefinite article ( $a=162$ ) + ( $an= 62$ ) = (224) made by the participants of the present research which constitutes (26% + 10%) 36% of the total percentage of the category *omission of articles* (as per table 4.4 and fig. 4.16). The subjects omitted the indefinite article *a/an* before a singular noun, professional title; first mention of anaphoric reference; prepositional phrase; and before an exclamation mark in the following sentences:

##### **Sentences with Ø Articles**

1. \*He is smart boy.
2. \*Ceylon is Island.
3. \*His father is veterinarian.

##### **Sentences with correct use of Articles**

1. He is *a* smart boy.
2. Ceylon is *an* Island.
3. His father is *a* veterinarian.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 4. *I bought new car yesterday          | 4. I bought <i>a</i> new car yesterday.          |
| 5. *What beautiful scene this is!       | 5. What <i>a</i> beautiful scene this is!        |
| 6. *He is honest person                 | 6. He is an honest person.                       |
| 7. *In urban area I saw a one-eyed man. | 7. In <i>an</i> urban area I saw a one-eyed man. |

In all the above examples, the respondents did not use the indefinite article *a/an* which should be present there according to English structure. It may be due to the absence of the indefinite *a/an* in the learners' native language or it may be that NL of the student does not require the use of the articles in these contexts. That is why, the causes of the learners' deviation from the target language rules in such contexts can be attributed to the learners' mother tongue interference (MTI). This assumption may be supported by the work of researchers like Duskova (1969), Richards (1971), Bataineh (2002), and among others as cited by Bataineh (2005, p. 67) where the same error was made by learners from Arabic and other language backgrounds that either do not have corresponding article systems or articles altogether.

#### **4.2.1.3.2 Omission of the Definite Article "the"**

The total number of errors found in the omission of the definite article *the* (as shown in table 4.4 and fig. 4.16) is 394 which constitutes 64% to the total percentage of omission of articles. The participants, omitted the definite article frequently before a specific noun, musical instrument, particular habit, institution used for specific purpose, unique nouns, superlative adjective, and before an idiom phrase in the following sentences:

#### **Sentences with Ø Article**

1. \*World is a stage where the director is God.
2. \*Ramayana is a famous epic.
3. \*Last year I visited Mexico and United States.
4. \*Do you like to go to Cinema?
5. \*River Volga flows into Caspian Sea.
6. \*Habit of smoking is common here.

7. \*Jill plays the violin in the corner of the room.
8. \*Bombay is biggest city of India.
9. \*John went to hospital to see his uncle.

#### **Sentences with correct use of Article**

1. The World is a stage where the director is God
2. The Ramayana is a famous epic
3. Last year I visited Mexico and the United States
4. Do you like to go to *the* Cinema?
5. River Volga flows into *the* Caspian Sea.
6. The habit of smoking is common here.
7. Jill plays the violin in the corner of the room.
8. Bombay is the biggest city of India.
9. John went to the hospital to see his uncle.

In Standard English, the definite article in a noun phrase such as, the world, the cosmos, or the earth, etc indicates the meaning of uniqueness. But informants omitted *the* before the unique noun as in examples number 1 and 2 given above. Usually, an article is not used before the name of a country unless; it starts with the word 'united', like- *The USA*, *The UK*, etc. But the subjects of the research do not have a complete idea of this fact. Therefore, they chose incorrect option of omission of articles before the word 'united' as in sentence number 3 given above.

There are certain idioms which require the definite article *the* even in a general sense, such as: Go to the cinema/ theatre/ opera/ pictures/ movies/ circus/ ballet, etc. However, the informants failed to choose the correct option and omitted article *the* before such idioms in sentence number 4 shown above. In fact, the definite article *the* is used to denote a particular person/place/thing and also before a particular habit like: *the habit of drinking beer*. However, the respondents omitted the definite article *the* before a particular noun and a particular habit as shown in sentences number 5 and 6 given above.

Furthermore, students also omitted the definite article before superlative degree of an adjective as, in example number 7 given above. Similarly, musical instruments such as, *violin, piano, drums*, etc do not omit *the*. But the respondents omitted *the* before a musical instrument as indicated in the sentence number 8 provided above. Likewise, when an institution is used for a specific purpose, it takes an article but the students omitted *the* before the noun *hospital* used for specific purpose like in example number 9 given above.

All these errors can be attributed to poor learning or misconception of rules of the target language. It is the learner's failure to learn the correct uses of articles. And also the respondents deleted the definite article *the* due to their limited experience in dealing with English articles, as they have already learned that, in some cases, English does not require the definite article *the*. That is why all the errors in sentences number 1 to 9 given above can be attributed to developmental errors.

#### **4.3 Analysis of the Third Section of the Questionnaire (Section 3)**

This is the last section of the questionnaire. It attempts the analysis of errors committed by the participants of the study in the use of English prepositions. It consisted of 25 multiple choice questions where respondents had to pick the correct preposition and fill the gaps left out in the sentences. Errors were found in all the three types of prepositions as: prepositions of time, place, and motion.

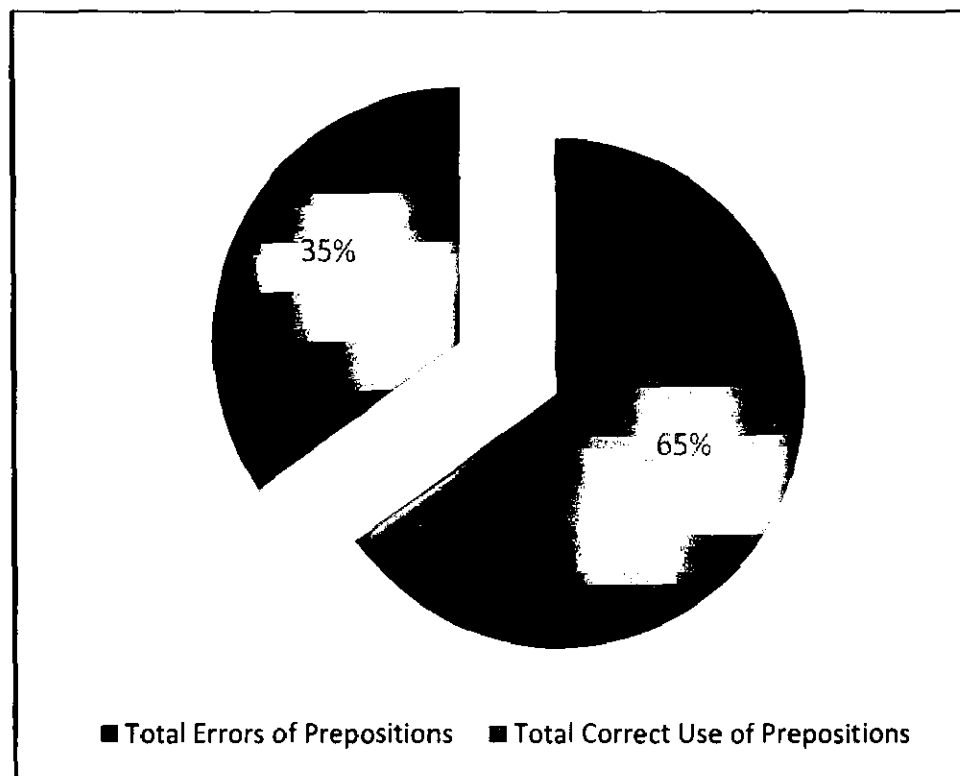
Although the usage of English prepositions is rule based, yet informants of this study reveal very less and inappropriateness. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) believe that ESL/EFL learners of English tend to have three types of problems with the usage of prepositions: (i) choosing the wrong preposition; (ii) omitting a needed preposition; and (iii) using a superfluous preposition. The same classification of errors was found in the use of selected prepositions by the respondents of the present research. Thus, the error tendencies found in this study can be classified with slight modification into the following three categories:

- Incorrect Use of Prepositions
- Redundant Use of Prepositions
- Omission of Prepositions.



All the above three terms have been defined in the preceding section of this chapter. Therefore, it is not necessary to repeat them here.

1630 errors - out of 2,500 blanks (total number of gaps in each questionnaire multiplied by total number of respondents, i.e. 25 gaps  $\times$  100 total number of respondents = 2,500) were found in all three categories (i.e. incorrect use, redundant use and omission of prepositions). They constitute 65.2% to the total errors pertaining to the use of prepositions while, the rest 34.8.0% (i.e. 35) are the correct use of prepositions. The percentage of incorrect use and correct use of prepositions is shown in figure 4.17.



***Fig. 4.17. Percentage of errors & correct use of prepositions***

#### **4.3.1 Classification of Errors of Prepositions**

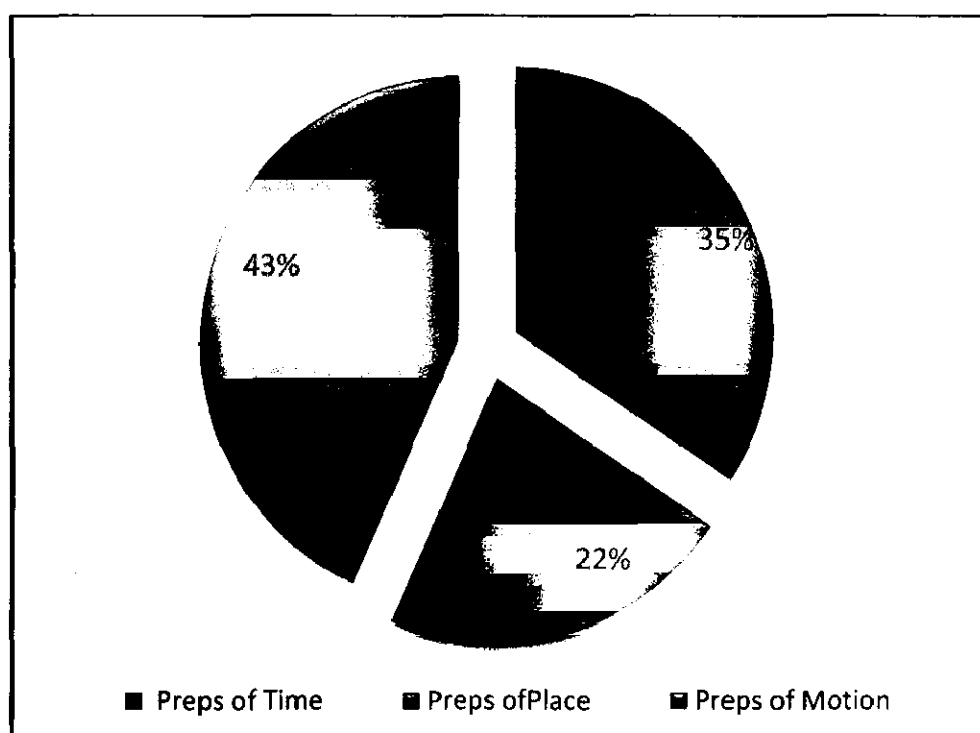
Total 1630 errors are classified into three types of prepositions on the basis of intended objective of this research categorized as follows:

- Errors of Prepositions Denoting Time
- Errors of Prepositions Denoting Place
- Errors of Prepositions Denoting Motion

All error tendencies and their percentage can be shown in table 4.5 and figure 4.18 as follows:

**Table: 4.5. Errors & related frequency of prepositions of time, place & motion**

Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage (approximate)
Prepositions of Time	561	34.41
Prepositions of Place	363	22.26
Prepositions of Motion	706	43.31
<b>Sum</b>	<b>1630</b>	<b>100.0</b>



**Fig. 4.18. Percentage of errors of prepositions of time, place & motion**

The description and explanation of all types of errors pertaining to the prepositions of time, place and motion are presented in the following ways:

#### **4.3.1.1 Errors of Prepositions Denoting Time**

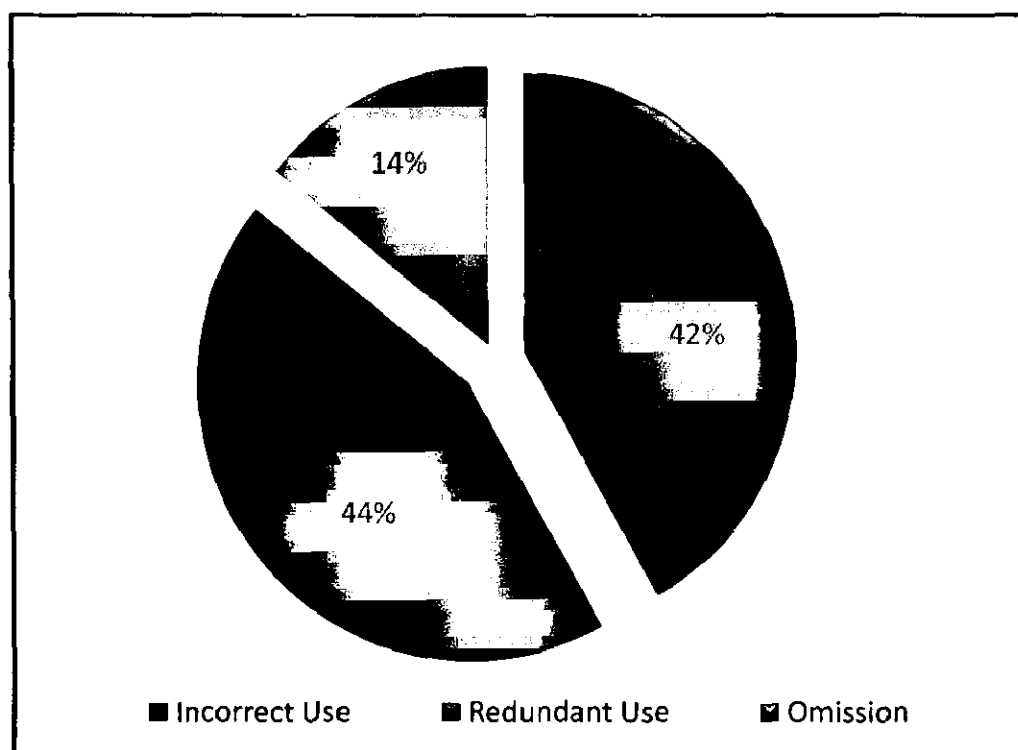
In this class, participants of the study made 561-out of-1630 which constitutes 34.41% (i.e. 35%) according to the table 4.5 and figure 4.18. Errors found in this class can be categorized into the following three types:

- Incorrect use of prepositions of time
- Redundant use of prepositions of time, and
- Omission of prepositions of time

Errors regarding all three categories can be depicted in the following ways:

**Table: 4.6. Errors & related frequency in all categories of prepositions of time**

Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage (%) (approximate)
Incorrect use of prepositions of time	235	41.88
Redundant use of prepositions of time	246	43.85
Omission of prepositions of time	80	14.26
<b>Sum</b>	561	100.0



**Fig. 4.19. Percentage of errors in all categories of prepositions of time**

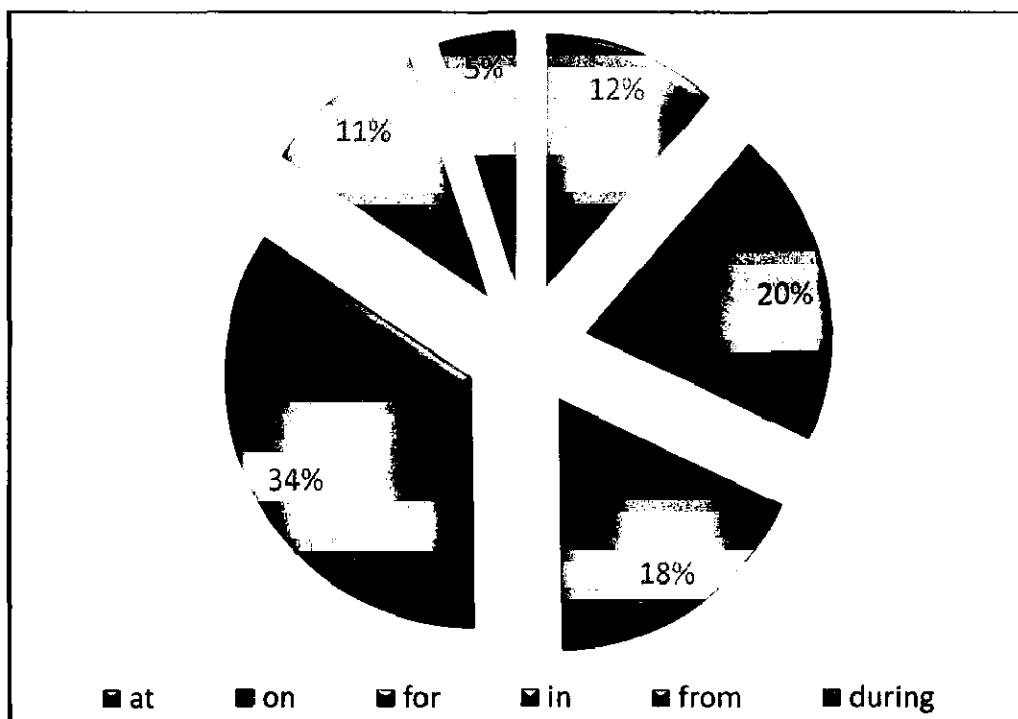
The description of all three error categories can be described in details. They are as follows:

#### 4.3.1.1.1 Incorrect Use of Prepositions of Time

The total number of mistakes made by respondents in this category is 235- out of - 561 which constitutes 42% (as per fig. 4.19). Errors found in this category can be illustrated for each variable as follows:

**Table: 4.7. Frequency of variables of incorrect use in prepositions of time**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%) (approximate)
At	27	11.48
On	48	20.42
In	81	34.46
For	42	17.87
From	25	10.63
During	12	5.10
Sum	235	100.0



**Fig. 4.20. Percentage of variables of incorrect use in prepositions of time**

The analysis reveals that the subjects made greater number of errors in the use of *in*. 81 errors out of 235 which formed 34%. It indicates that the participants of the study have little knowledge in the use of *in* regarding the time phrase. Their wrong substitution of one preposition for another one is found in the following situations:

- Incorrect use of *in*, *on* and *from* in place of *at*
- Incorrect use of *in*, and *at* in place of *on*
- Incorrect use of *from*, *during* and *for* in place of *since*

#### 4.3.1.1.1 Incorrect use of 'in', 'on' and 'from' in place of "at"

1. They got to New York \*in night.
2. The English class begins \*in 8 o'clock.
3. They got to New York \*on night.
4. The English class begins \*on 8 o'clock.
5. The English class begins \*from 8 o'clock.

*At night* is an idiom. The word 'night' can be used in different ways. For example; 'specific points of time' (using *at*), 'units of time' like dates and days or their parts (using *on*) and to more extended 'periods' such as months, years, and seasons (using *in*) (Yule, 1998, p. 160). But the respondents of the study could not recognize the correct use and made mistakes in choosing *in* and *on* instead of *at* (in specific 'points' of time) in the examples from 1 to 4 given above. Respondents also made mistake by inserting *from* instead of *at* to indicate exact 'point' of time in sentence number 5 given above; even though, *from* denotes the notion of period of time.

In the above sentences respondents made errors by using *in*, *on* and *from* instead of *at*. It may be due to the learner's failure to learn the correct rules of uses of English prepositions. Bad teaching method can also be understood as one of the reasons for these errors. If the teacher teaches the students clearly that the central meaning of *at* is to exist in a certain point of time, *on* is used with units of time like dates and days or their parts and *in* is employed in very general sense of extended periods like year, month and season, the chances of occurring errors would decrease.

#### 4.3.1.1.2 Incorrect use of 'in', and 'at' in place of "on"

1. He never comes to class \*in time.
2. This treaty was signed \*in November 2, 1962.
3. He never comes to class \*at time.
4. This treaty was signed \*at November 2, 1962.

*On time* refers to exactly set or pre-arranged time while, *in time* means before a scheduled time, followed by *to* + a verb or a phrase beginning with *for*. But the informants could not differentiate between the usage of *in time/on time* and made errors by using the prepositions *in* and *at* instead of *on* in sentences number 1 and 3 given above. Furthermore, informants made errors by using the preposition *in* and *at* instead of *on* in sentences number 2 and 4 given above while the dates that have numerals, such as on the 4<sup>th</sup> June/June 4<sup>th</sup>, on 21<sup>st</sup> August, on July 9, 1969, etc. are preceded by the preposition *on*.

The informants seem to have applied limited knowledge in the use of *in* and *at*. Therefore, they used incorrect application of rules of prepositions *in* and *at* because of which they committed errors.

Again insufficient teaching procedure may be responsible for these types of mistakes. If the difference between the meaning of *on time* and *in time* and the use of *on* with time phrases followed by numerals are made clear to the students in the classroom then learners would not be confused and chances of committing errors would lessen.

#### 4.3.1.1.3 Incorrect use of 'from', 'during' and 'for' in place of "since"

1. He has lived in the U.S. \*from 1962.
2. He has lived in the U.S. \*during 1962.
3. He has lived in the U.S. \*for 1962.

Both *since* and *from* are used before a noun denoting some point of time. However, *since* is preceded by a verb in the perfect tense and *from* is used with the non-perfect tense. Furthermore, *during* and *for* indicate duration of time (or period of time). But the informants did not seem to interpret these distinctions due to which they made

errors by using the preposition *from*, *during* and *for* instead of *since* in the examples number 1 to 3 given above.

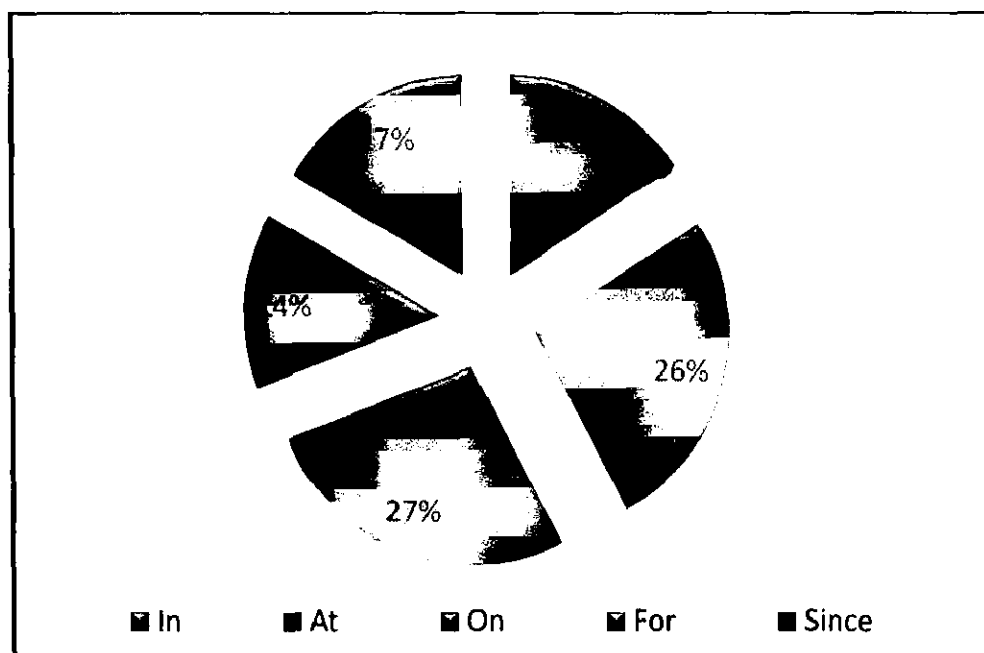
This may be due to incomplete knowledge of the rules of the target language or poor practice in using *for*, *from*, *during* and *since* may be another reason for these deviations.

#### 4.3.1.1.2 Redundant Use of Prepositions of Time

The greatest number of errors was found in this category. The participants of the study made 246-out of -561 errors which constitutes 44% of errors of prepositions of time as per figure 4.19. The illustration is as follows:

**Table: 4.8. Frequency of variables of redundant use in prepositions of time**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%) (approximate)
At	65	26.42
On	66	26.82
In	39	15.85
For	35	14.22
Since	41	16.66
<b>Sum</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>100.0</b>



**Fig.4.21. Percentage of variables of redundant use in prepositions of time**

The analysis reveals that more errors were found in the use of *on*. 66 errors were made in the use of *on* which formed 27% (as per fig. 4.21). It indicates that the participants of the study have little appropriacy in the use of *on*. The informants' unnecessary insertion of prepositions of time phrases can be described in the following points –

- i) Redundant use of *in*, *on*, and *at* instead of  $\emptyset$  (none) and
- ii) Redundant use of *since*, *for* and *during* instead of  $\emptyset$  (none)

#### **4.3.1.1.2.1 Redundant use of ‘in’, ‘on’, and ‘at’ in place of “ $\emptyset$ ” (none)**

1. I saw her last *\*in* Sunday evening.
2. We will be in Eugene *\*in* tonight.
3. I saw her *\*on* last Sunday evening.
4. We will be in Eugene *\*on* tonight.
5. I saw her *\*at* last Sunday evening.
6. We will be in Eugene *\*at* tonight.

Prepositions are not used with deictic words, such as: *last*, *next*, *this*, *that*; the quantifying words *some* and *every*; and nouns that have *last*, *next*, or *this* as an element of their meaning today/ yesterday/ tomorrow/tonight. But, most of the informants were found to have inserted preposition *in*, *on* and *at* which is apparent from the examples 1 to 6 given above.

#### **4.3.1.1.2.2 Redundant use of ‘since’, ‘for’ and ‘during’ in place of “ $\emptyset$ ” (none)**

7. We stayed there *\*since* all week.
8. We stayed there *\*for* all week.
9. We stayed there *\*during* all week.

The omission of a preposition is must in the temporal noun phrase consisting of the quantifying words, like *some*, *every* or *all* – *all day*, *all (the) week*. Moreover, a large number of respondents inserted preposition *since*, *for*, and *during* unnecessarily in the examples sentences from 7 to 9. All the exemplified sentences from 1 to 9 as included in the subsections 4.3.1.1.2.1 and 4.3.1.1.2.2 may be erroneous for two



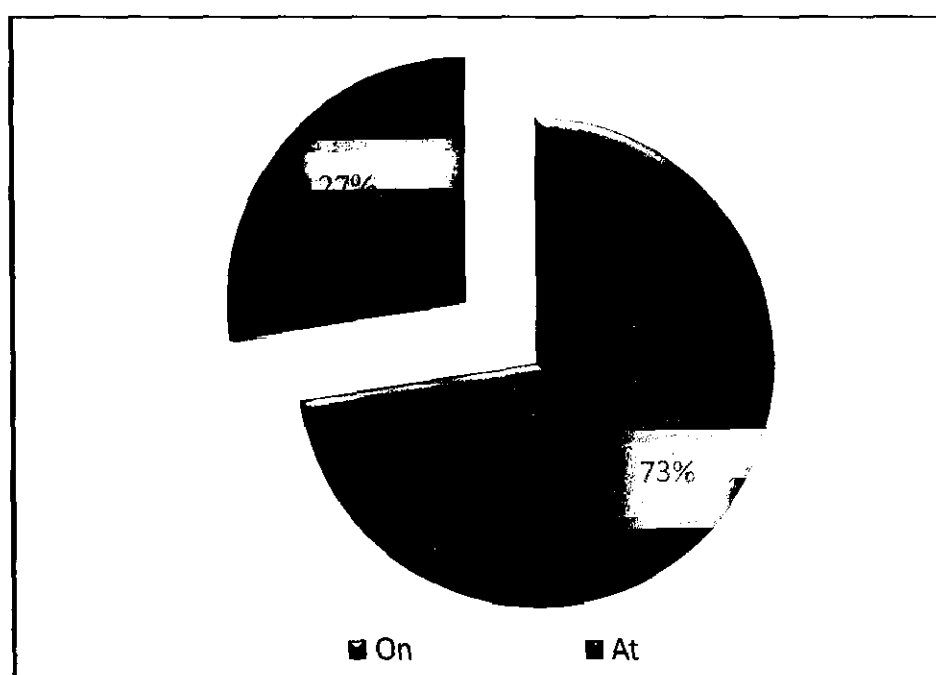
possible causes: (a) learners' mother tongue may have the provision of using the function words in such situations and (b) exception to the rules in the target languages may also be a plausible reason for these types of errors.

#### 4.3.1.1.3 Omission of Prepositions of Time

The lowest errors are found in this category. The participants made 80 errors- out of -561 which constitutes 14% of errors of prepositions of time (as per figure 4.19). The explanation of the category *omission of prepositions of time* can be described as follows:

**Table: 4.9. Frequency of variables of omission in prepositions of time**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)(approximate)
At	22	27.5
On	58	72.5
<b>Sum</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>



**Fig. 4.22. Percentage of variables of omission in prepositions of time**

Evidently two prepositions i.e. *on* and *at* were found to be problematic for the respondents of this study. However, they were much confused in the use of *on* (as revealed in fig. 22). The participants replaced  $\emptyset$  with *on* and *at* in the context where its use was must. The following are illustrative examples of *omission* regarding the prepositions of time:

1. He never comes to class\* $\emptyset$  time.
2. The English class begins \* $\emptyset$  8 o'clock.
3. This treaty was signed \* $\emptyset$  November 2, 1962.
4. They got to New York \* $\emptyset$  night.

The omission of a preposition is usually committed due to the lack of these items in the learners' L1. Therefore, the omission of prepositions *at* and *on* in the examples number 1 to 4 can be attributed either to the MT interference, or it may be due to the ignorance of the rules restriction existing in the target language.

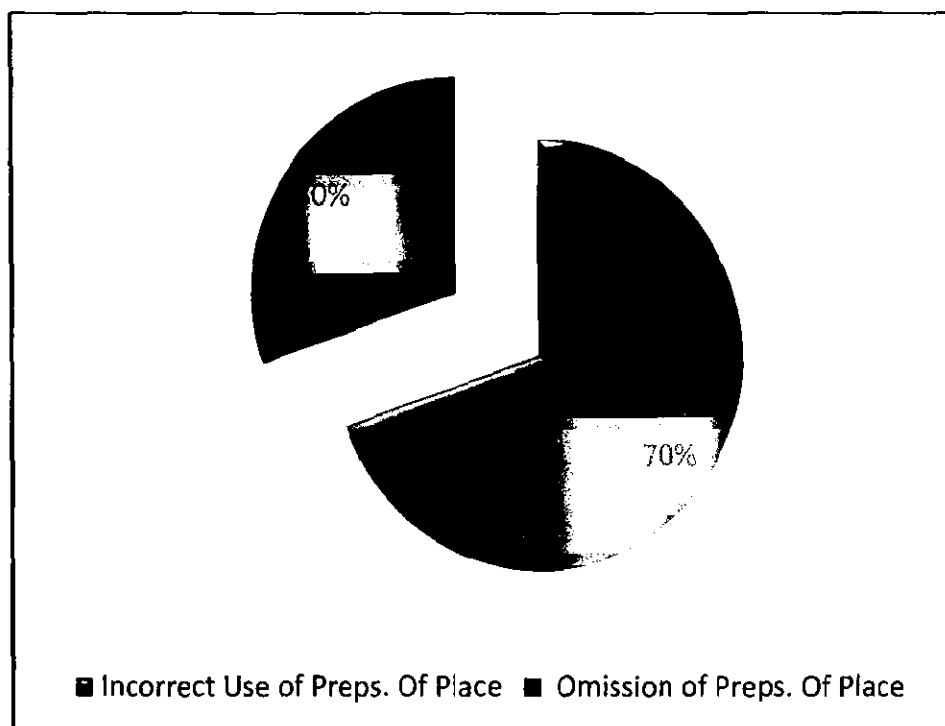
#### 4.3.1.2 Errors of Prepositions Denoting Place

363 errors- out of -1630 were made by respondents in this class of prepositions. They formed 22% (as per figure 4.18) of errors of prepositions of place. The following two error categories were found in this class:

- Incorrect use of prepositions of place, and
- Omission of prepositions of place

**Table:4.10. Errors & related frequency in all categories of prepositions of place**

Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage (%) (approximate)
Incorrect use of prepositions of place	253	69.69
Omission of prepositions of place	110	30.30
<b>Sum</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>100.0</b>



***Fig.4.23.Percentage of errors in all categories of prepositions of place***

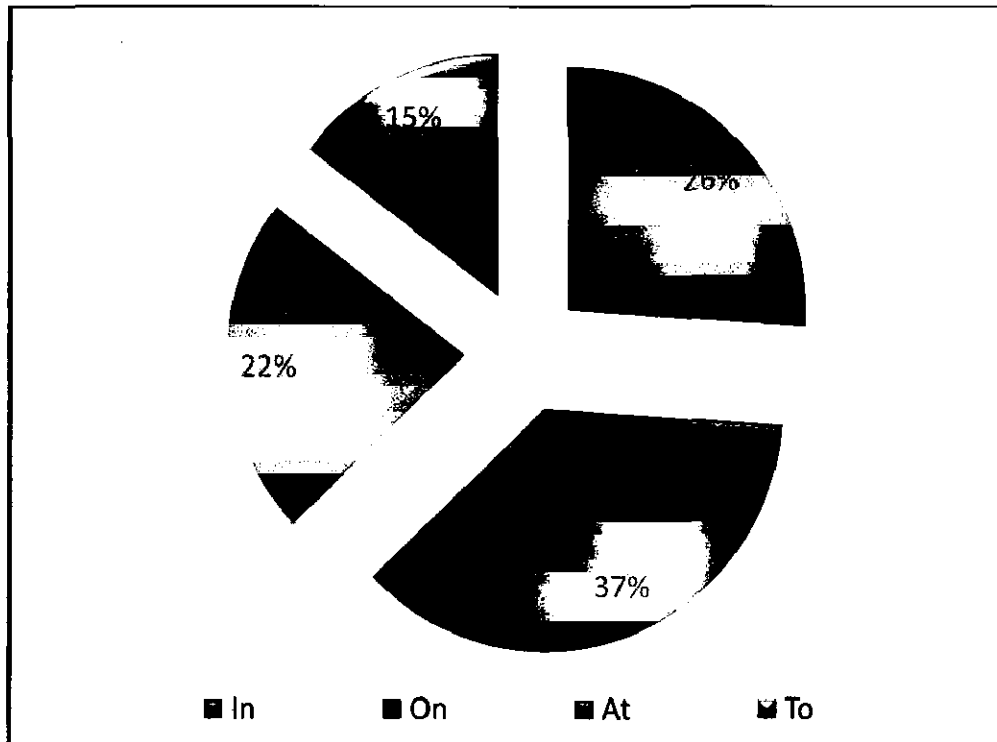
The description of both categories is explained in the following ways:

#### **4.3.1.2.1 Incorrect Use of Prepositions of Place**

The total number of mistakes made by respondents in this class of prepositions is 253- out of – 363 of errors of prepositions of place which constitutes 70%. The description of these errors is as follows:

**Table: 4.11. Frequency of variables of incorrect use in prepositions of place**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)(approximate)
At	57	22.52
On	93	36.75
In	66	26.08
To	37	14.62
Sum	253	100.0



**Fig.4.24. Percentage of variables of incorrect use in prepositions of place**

The greatest errors made by respondents were found in the use of the preposition *on* which is apparent from analysis of the data as per table 4.11 and figure 4.24. The participants substituted one preposition of place with another in the following contexts:

- Incorrect use of *in* and *on* in place of *at*
- Incorrect use of *on* and *at* and *to* in place of *in*
- Incorrect use of *in* and *at* in place of *on*

#### **4.3.1.2.1.1 Incorrect use of 'in' and 'on', in place of "at"**

1. Meet me \*in the bus stop.
2. Meet me \*on the bus stop.
3. They live \*in 140 David Street.
4. They live \*on 140 David Street.
5. They are sitting \*in the table to eat dinner.
6. They are sitting \*on the table to eat dinner.

As the function of *at*, *on* and *in* is in relation to time just as these prepositions have the same function in relation to space such as; *at* is used to exist in a certain point of space and *on* is next to *at* in the sense of specific while *in* is used in most general sense. But informants of this investigation made mistakes in using the correct preposition *in*, and *on* instead of *at* in the examples 1 to 6 given above. Once again insufficient teaching method is to blame for these erroneous performances. The teacher should make the learners clear by teaching such prepositions with examples like: I live *at* 252 Linden Street; I live *on* Linden Street; I live *in* Bellmore (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman 1999, p. 419).

#### ***4.3.1.2.1.2 Incorrect use of 'on', 'at' and 'to' in place of "in"***

1. John was sleeping *\*on* his armed chair.
2. John was sleeping *\*at* his armed chair.
3. She will arrive *\*on* Spain on Monday.
4. She will arrive *\*at* Spain on Monday.
5. She will arrive *\*to* Spain on Monday

However, *on* is used with a straight chair/sofa/couch, etc and *in* is employed with a comfortable chair. But, a large number of informants made errors by using the preposition *on*, and *at* instead of '*in*' in examples number 1 and 2 given above.

It might be plausible that the learners over-generalized that something must have been put on the chair.

The expression 'arrive *in* a city/country' is used in the correct sense, while, *arrive at* is used for any other destination, like arrived at the hotel /airport /bridge or crossroads, etc. while, '*to*' on the other hand, is a motion and directional word that connects the nouns to the verbs of motion, such as: driving, go, come, went, and rushed, etc. But the informants made mistakes by substituting *on*, *at* and *to* in place of '*in*' in examples number 3 to 5 given above.

These deviations can be attributed to false concept hypothesis due to which the participants failed to use the correct concepts.

#### 4.3.1.2.1.3 Incorrect use of 'at' and 'in' in place of "on"

1. The book is *\*at* the desk.
2. The book is *\*in* the desk.

*On* is used for a surface, like *on the wall /floor/door/cover* and *on a street/desk/ceiling* whereas, *in* means inside which is used for an enclosed space: *in the garden/a country/town/ building/ room*. On the other hand, *at* indicates zero dimensions, it refers to a point of place, but most of the students in this study made a mistake by substituting *in* and *at* instead of *on* in sentences number 1 and 2 given above.

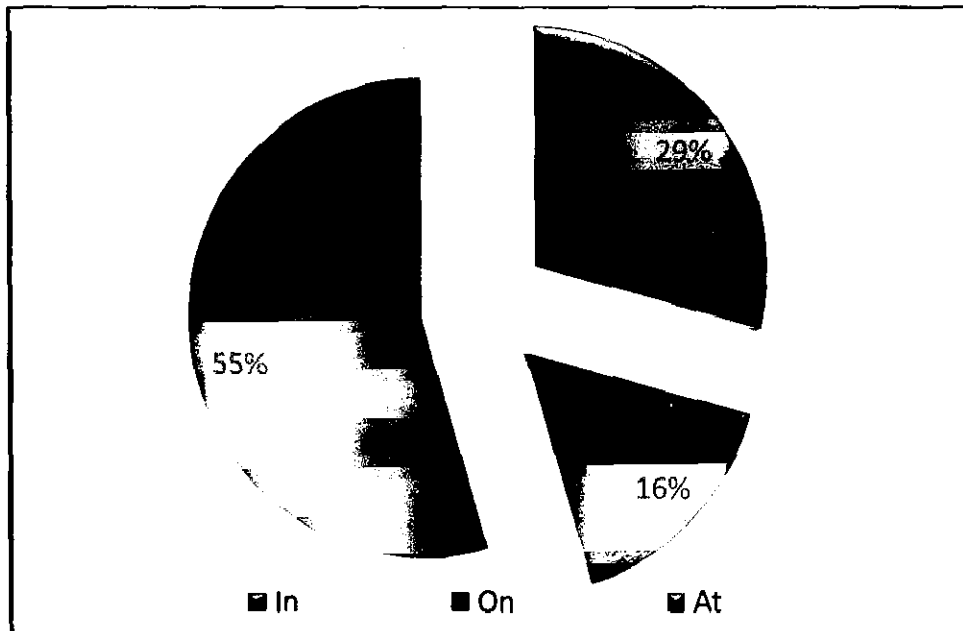
It may be due to the learners' false concept that prevents them to use the correct concepts. The learners generalized that some object should be *at* the desk or *in* the desk.

#### 4.3.1.2.2 Omission of Prepositions of Place

The total number of errors made by the respondents in this category is 110- out of – 363 (total errors of prepositions of place) which constitutes 30% according to table 4.10 and figure 4.23. Each variable with their related frequency and percentage can be shown in the following ways:

**Table: 4.12. Frequency of variables of omission in prepositions of place**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)(approximate)
At	60	54.54
On	18	16.36
In	32	29.9
Sum	110	100.0



***Fig.4.25. Percentage of variables of omission in prepositions of place***

It is evident from analysis that *at* is a much problematic preposition in the sense of locative preposition for these students. The participants omitted necessary prepositions *in*, *on*, and *at* from the following statements:

***4.3.1.2.2.1 Use of “Ø” (none) in place of ‘on’, ‘in’ and “at”***

1. The book is \*Ø the desk (on)
2. John was sleeping \*Ø his armed chair (in)
3. They live \*Ø 140 David Street (at)
4. Meet me \*Ø the bus stop (at)
5. They are sitting\*Ø the table to eat dinner (at)
6. She will arrive \*Ø Spain on Monday (in)

It is evident that the respondents deviated from the correct use because of the incomplete application of rules that leads to false analogy due to which respondents got confused in applying appropriate preposition in the aforementioned sentences. It might also be plausible to say that they ignored the rules to use properly.

#### 4.3.1.3 Errors of Prepositions Denoting Motion

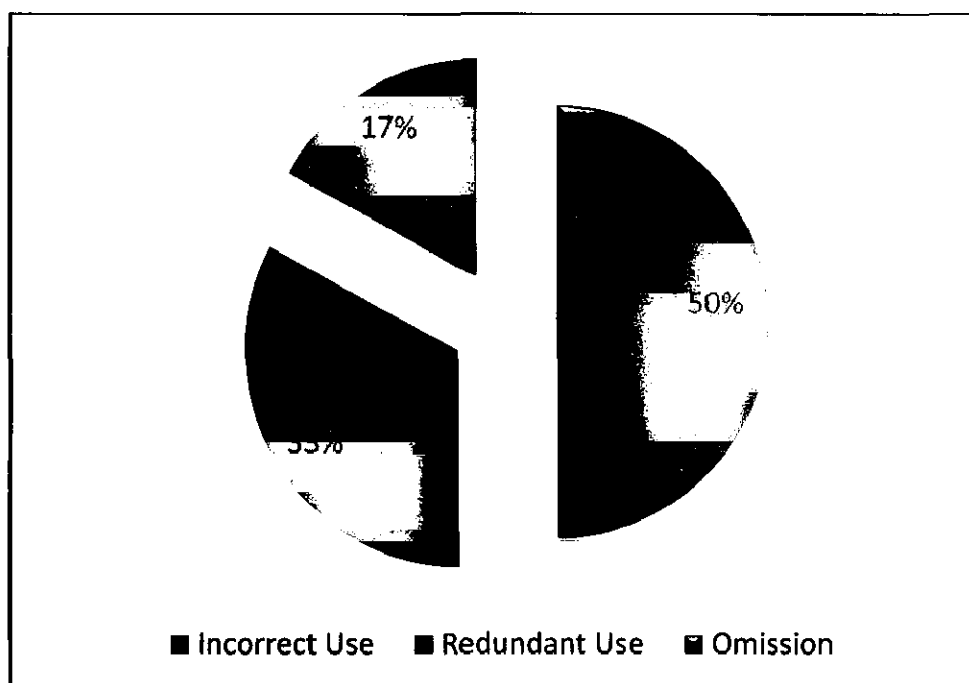
The largest quantity of errors was found in this class of prepositions. The total number of errors made by the respondents in this category is 706- out of-1630 which constitutes 43% of total percentage according to figure 4.18. The following error tendencies were discovered in this class of prepositions:

- Incorrect use of prepositions of motion
- Redundant use of prepositions of motion, and
- Omission of prepositions of motion

All three categories can be depicted in the following ways:

**Table: 4.13. Errors & related frequency in all categories of prepositions of motion**

Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage(%) (approximate)
Incorrect use of prepositions of motion	352	49.85
Redundant use of prepositions of motion	233	33.00
Omission of prepositions of motion	121	17.13
<b>Sum</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>100.0</b>



**Fig.4.26. Percentage of errors in all categories of prepositions of motion**



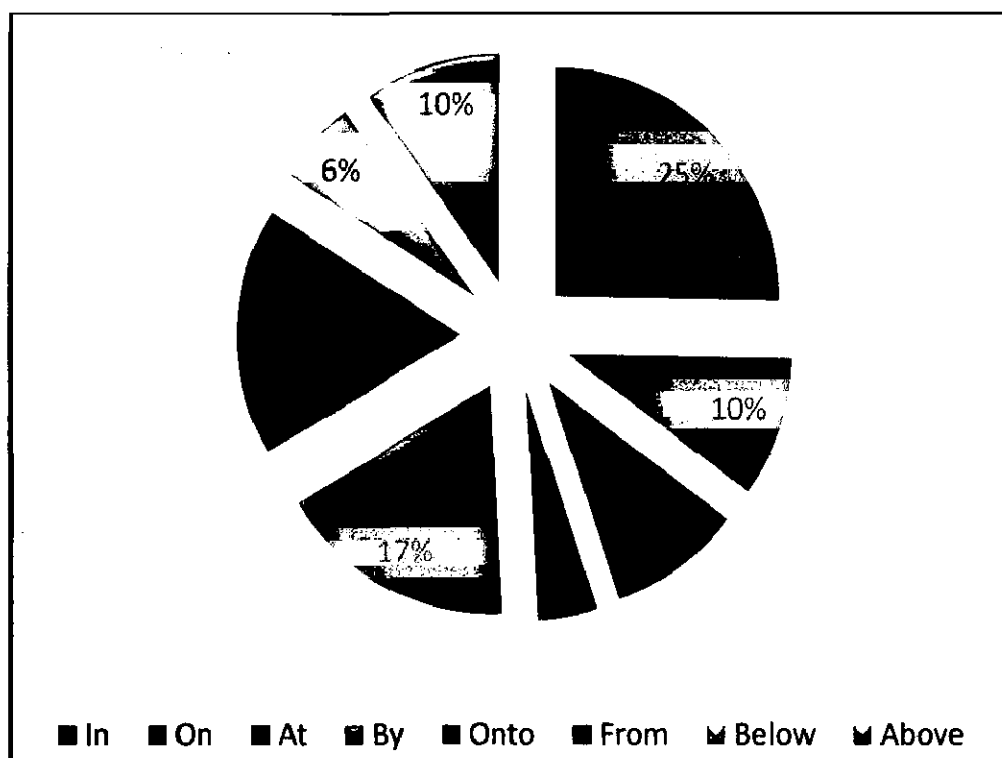
Errors pertaining to the prepositions of motion regarding all three categories are explained in the following ways:

#### **4.3.1.3.1 Incorrect Use of Prepositions of Motion**

The analysis of data indicates that a large portion of the sample of the current study made errors in this category. 352 errors - out of – 706 errors of prepositions of motion which constitutes 50% (as per fig. 4.26) were found. The description of errors for each variable is discussed as follows:

**Table: 4.14. Frequency of variables of incorrect use in prepositions of motion**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)(approximate)</b>
At	34	9.65
On	35	9.94
In	89	25.28
By	15	4.26
Onto	61	17.32
From	62	17.61
Below	21	5.96
Above	35	9.94
<b>Sum</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>100.0</b>



**Fig.4.27. percentage of variables of incorrect use in prepositions of motion**

Analysis reveals that participants of the study face much difficulty in the use of *in* which is obvious from table 4.14. 89 numbers of errors which make 25% as per figure 4.27. The respondents substituted one motional preposition for another one in the following contexts:

- Incorrect use of *in*, *by* in place of *on*
- Incorrect use of *on*, *from*, *onto* in place of *off*
- Incorrect use of *above*, and *below* in place of *over*
- Incorrect use of *in* and *onto* in place of *into*

#### **4.3.1.3.1.1 Incorrect use of 'in' and 'by' in place of "on"**

1. George usually goes to work *\*in* the bus, but sometimes he goes in his car.
2. George usually goes to work *\*by* the bus, but sometimes he goes in his car.

For means of transportation, *by* is used before noun; e.g. *by bus, by car, by bicycle, by ship, by taxi*, etc in general while, *in* and *on* are used to refer to a specific vehicle although, *in* is used with specific or personal *car, taxi, van*, etc., and *on* is used with specific or personal *bus, bicycle, boat*, etc. But the informants could not differentiate the meaning and use of these prepositions as they made errors in the sentences number 1 and 2 given above.

The above mentioned erroneous sentences can be attributed to mother tongue interference. It might be possible that the learners' mother tongue's prepositions that corresponds to English prepositions *in* and *by* are used with both general and personal vehicles, that is why they could not differentiate between the use of *in, by* and *on*. This made fail them to observe the correct use of *on* in the said context.

#### **4.3.1.3.1.2 Incorrect use of 'above', and 'below' in place of "over"**

1. The air plane flew \*above the city.
2. The air plane flew \*below the city.

*Above* and *below* indicate only position while, *over* also carries a 'sense of covering or movement'. Moreover, the informants could not comprehend the correct use and meaning of these prepositions, and they have made errors by replacing the preposition *above* and *below* in place of *over* in sentences number 1 and 2 given above.

Ignorance of rule restriction might be a plausible reason for these errors due to which informants could not follow restrictions of rule and hence violated the limitation.

#### **4.3.1.3.1.3 Incorrect use of 'in' 'on' and 'onto' in place of "into"**

1. We got \*in the car.
2. We got \*on the car.
3. The boy fell \*in the well.
4. The boy fell \*onto the well.

5. He walked \*in the room and slammed the door.

6. He walked \*onto the room and slammed the door.

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973, p. 147) state that a prepositional phrase can employ any verb, but the concept of 'direction' needs a dynamic verb like; *go, move, fly*, etc. According to them, the preposition *in, on and at* denote position while, *to, into* and *onto* refer to direction/movement. But the informants of this study did not seem to have the ability to distinguish between the static prepositions and the dynamic ones that is why, they made errors by substituting the preposition of position *in* instead of *into* in the examples number 1, 3, 5 and *on* in example 2. Furthermore, *onto* (on + to) as a directional preposition denotes the expression of movement toward the outside of an object while, *into* (in + to) is used to express movement towards the inside of an object, space, or volume. Moreover, students made mistakes by using *onto* instead of *into* in the sense of towards the inside of an object, in sentences number 4 and 6 given above.

The use of *in* instead of *into* in examples number 1, 3, 5 and *on* in example 2 can be attributed to false analogy of target language (L2) patterns, while the use of *onto* instead of *into* in examples number 4, and 6 shown above can be due to the wrong concept of the use of prepositions in English.

#### **4.3.1.3.1.4 Incorrect use of 'on', 'from', 'onto' in place of "off"**

1. He slipped \*from the motor cycle.

2. Please pick the newspaper up \*from the floor

3. He slipped \*onto the motor cycle.

4. Please pick the newspaper up \*on the floor.

The preposition *from* simply tells the place where the movement started. It also indicates the point of departure, While *off* is used for separation. *Off* is opposite of *on* which means away from another object or separation from it. Likewise, the preposition *on* is used to denote something on the surface of some other object and *onto* refers to the movement of some object at the top of something. Moreover,

respondents could not differentiate between the meaning of the said prepositions, and they made errors by using the preposition *from* in sentences number 1-2, *onto* in sentences 3 and *on* in sentences 4 instead of *off*.

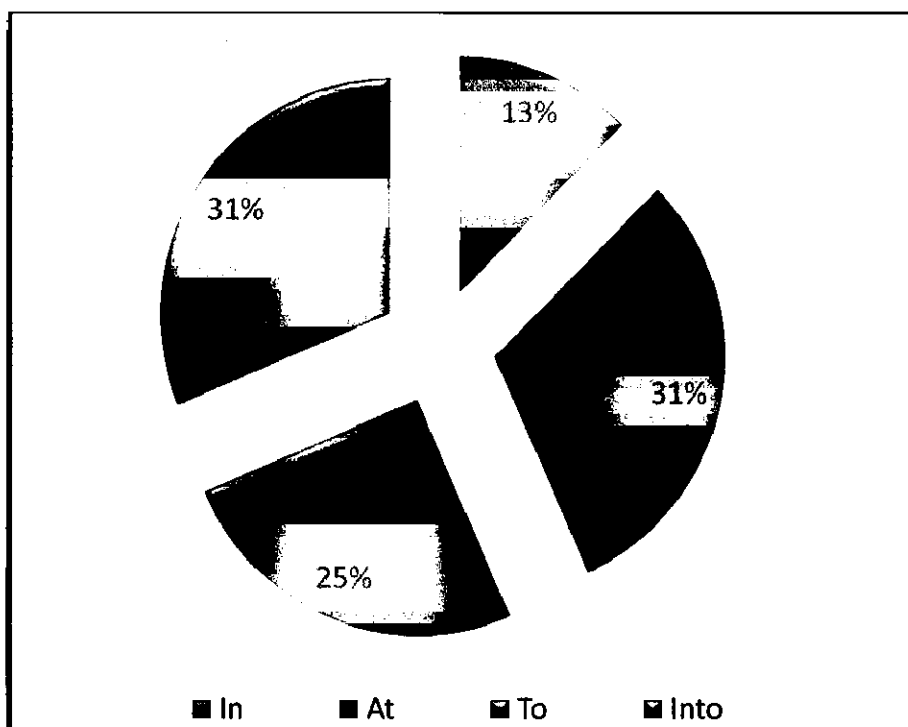
The use of *on* instead of *off* in the example no. 4 can be attributed to false application of the target language (L2) patterns while the use of *onto* and *from* instead of *off* in examples number 1-3 can be due to the hypothesized wrong conceptions of the use of preposition in English.

#### 4.3.1.3.2 Redundant Use of Prepositions of Motion

The second large numbers of errors in this class of prepositions are found in this category. The respondents made 233 errors - out of – 706 errors of prepositions of motion, which constitutes 33% according to figure 4.26. The description of errors found in this category for each variable can be demonstrated as follows:

**Table: 4.15. Frequency of variables of redundant use in prepositions of motion**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)(approximate)
At	72	30.90
In	29	12.44
To	59	25.32
Into	73	31.33
<b>Sum</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>100.0</b>



**Fig.4.28. percentage of variables in redundant use of prepositions of motion**

The observation of analysis (as per fig. 4.28) reveals that respondents of the study made greater number of insertions *into* and *at*. The illustration of redundant use of prepositions of motion can be discussed through the following points:

#### **4.3.1.3.2.1 Redundant Use of 'to', 'at', and 'in' place of "Ø" (none) with "home"**

1. John went *\*to* home.
2. John went *\*at* home.
3. John went *\*in* home.

The word *home* with a motion verb + home do not require a preposition, such as went/go home. But if *home* is preceded by another word or phrase, it requires a preposition. For example; *she returned to her parents' home*. As far as the phrase 'at + home', is concerned we can say; we live/stay/work, etc., *at home*, at + . . . + home or 'in + . . . + home. But the preposition *in* never is followed by *home* directly. For example; "*you can do this sort of work at home or at/in your own home*" (Martinet and Thomson 1960: 97). However, the informants were not aware of this fact.

The errors in the exemplified sentences 1 to 3 given above can be clearly attributed to the over-generalization of the existing experience. The use of *at* is over-generalized as the respondents have borrowed the fossilized noun phrase *at home*, learned it in one context and applied it incorrectly to other contexts. They also generalized that motion verb *went* takes the dynamic prepositions *to*. So, they used *to* incorrectly in such situations while, the use of '*in*' in such contexts indicates false analogy on the part of the learners as it does not show the directional meaning but position.

#### **4.3.1.3.2.2 Redundant use of 'to', 'in' and 'into' in place of "ø" (none) with "entered"**

4. We entered *\*to* the room.
5. We entered *\*in* the room.
6. We entered *\*into* the room.

The verb *enter* formally is not followed by the preposition *to* however, it can be preceded by the preposition *into* (a combination of *in* + *to*) in its idiomatic form which has different meanings. Besides, the verb *enter* can be followed by the infinitive *to* that can make it appear as a preposition, for example; *He entered the contest to win not to lose* (Al-Awaid, 2010, p. 125). But a great majority of students made errors by inserting redundant prepositions *to*, *in* and *into* before the verb *enter* in the contexts where it is not needed in the sentences 4 to 6.

It is evident from the result of the analysis that respondents could not follow the rules of use due to which they overgeneralized the rules of the target language on the basis of partial knowledge they inserted *to*, *in* and *into* in aforementioned examples number 4, 5 and 6.

#### **4.3.1.3.2.3 Redundant use of 'in', 'to', and 'into' place of "ø" (none) with "reached"**

7. When I reached *\*to* my classroom.
8. When I reached *\*in* my classroom.
9. When I reached *\*into* my classroom.

Furthermore, the word *reach* does not need a preposition in the sense of motional verb; however, it can take the preposition *to* only in its idiomatic form like *to reach (to)*. For example; *your voice will not reach to the audience* (Al- Awaid 2010, p.127). But participants probably were not aware of this fact, therefore, due to the ignorance of this rule, they inserted prepositions *to*, *in* and *into* in the contexts where it was not required. Their erroneous performance can be seen in examples number 7, 8 and 9.

Again, false analogy and overgeneralization is attributed to these errors. They generalized that motional verb needs a directional preposition like: *to* and *into* that is why by applying their limited knowledge they inserted *to*, *in* and *into* incorrectly in the contexts where it is not needed at all. The use of '*in*' in such contexts apparently is due to false analogy because it is a static preposition not motional one.

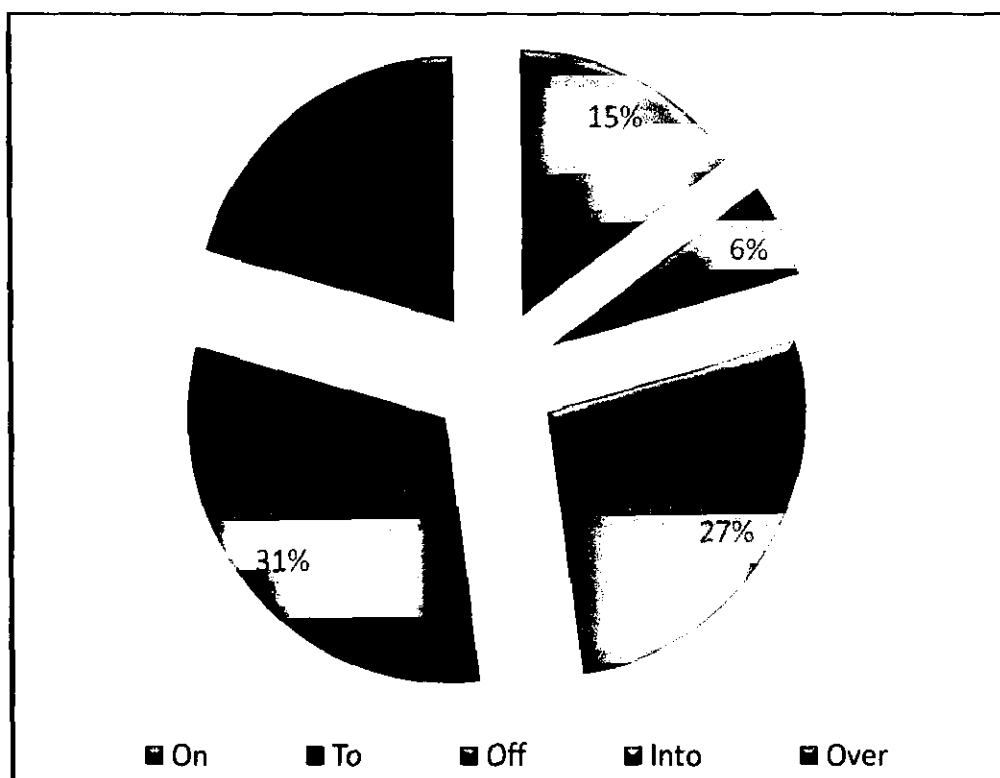
#### 4.3.1.3.3 Omission of Prepositions of Motion

The lowest numbers of errors are found in this category. The participants made 121 errors- out of- 706 errors of prepositions of motion which formed 17% as per table 4.13 and figure 4.26. The description of *omission* in this class is illustrated as follows:

**Table: 4.16. Frequency of variables of omission in prepositions of motion**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)(approximate)
On	18	14.87
To	7	5.78
Off	33	27.27
Into	38	31.40
Over	25	20.66
<b>Sum</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100.0</b>





**Fig.4.29. Percentage of variables of omission in prepositions of motion**

It is evident from the analysis that the participants of the study omitted the preposition *into* in a great deal. They omitted motional prepositions in the following sentences:

1. George usually goes to work \*Ø the bus, but sometimes he goes in his car
2. They went\*Ø the school.
3. He walked \*Ø the room and slammed the door.
4. We got \*Ø the car.
5. He slipped \*Ø the motor cycle.
6. Please pick the newspaper up\*Øthe floor.
7. The boy fell \*Ø the well.
8. The air plane flew\*Ø the city.

It might be plausible to state that respondents deviated from correct use because of incomplete application of rules that leads to confusion. They got confused in applying appropriate word. Another reason may be lack of these items in their L1 due to which they failed to use any preposition and committed errors by omitting necessary prepositions in sentences 1 to 8 given above.

#### **4.4 Conclusion of the Chapter**

On the basis of data analysis, it has been observed that of English articles and prepositions are the most difficult aspects of English grammar for respondents of the study. All errors that were found in the analysis can be attributed to mother tongue interference (MTI) as well as developmental errors. Errors related to MTI have been discussed in the sense that either mother tongue of the learners lacks these items or they use them in different ways. The developmental errors have been described in terms of inadequate comprehension of the TL rules, insufficient knowledge or practice in L2, false analogy and ignorance of rules, and incomplete application of rule restrictions. Over simplification of grammar books and insufficient teaching methods can also be considered as responsible factors for developmental errors.

*Chapter-5*

*Findings*  
*and*  
*Discussions*

## 5.1 Introduction of the Chapter

In this chapter, findings of the study are discussed. The findings of this research are based on the analysis of data which was collected from the sample of study and has been analyzed in preceding chapter. The chapter discusses the findings of each area of study separately in the following ways:

## 5.2 Findings of the Participants' Social & Linguistic Background

The findings of the respondents' social and academic background are presented in the following table 5.1:

**Table: 5.1 Participants' social & linguistic background**

Age Group		Gender		Origin		MT		MI	
Var.	Per%	Var.	Per%	Var.	Per%	Var.	Per%	Var.	Per%
17-18	43.0	Male	62.0	Urban	66.0	HN	48.0	HN	33.0
19-20	48.0	Female	38.0	Rural	34.0	UR	30.0	UR	4.0
21-24	9.0	Sum	100.0			EN	0.0	EN	54.0
Sum	100.0					Other	22.0	Other	9.0

MT= Mother tongue, MI: Instruction of mother tongue, Var. = Variable, Per% = Percentage, HN= Hindi, UR = Urdu, EN = English

The observation (as per the table 5.1) reveals that the participants of the study have a good social and linguistic background from all points of view, i.e. they started to learn English quite early, most of them have urban background, and medium of instruction was English at all levels of their education, most of the students fall under the age group of 19-20 years. However, the analysis of their written scripts revealed that they were unsuccessful in their linguistic production.

## 5.3 Findings of Articles

The findings of errors in the participants' use of articles exhibit that correct use of articles is one of the most difficult tasks in English grammar for them. The acquisition of English articles is difficult because:

- i) Articles are meaningless and redundant code markers; and
- ii) Within the system, there is an interference of form and function (more than one article can mean the same thing)

Total errors in all error tendencies of articles can be seen at a glance from table 5.2 to 5.4 which are as follows.

**Table: 5.2. Total numbers of errors of articles in all categories**

Total No. of Errors of Articles		
Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage(Approximate)
Incorrect Use of Articles	410	21.0
Redundant Use of Articles	932	48.0
Omission of Articles	618	31.0
<b>Sum</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table: 5.3. Demonstration of errors pertaining to articles in all categories**

Areas of Errors in Articles								
Incorrect Use of Articles			Redundant Use of Articles			Omission of Articles		
Var.	Freq.	Per%	Var.	Freq.	Per%	Var.	Freq.	Per%
a	134	33.0	a	215	23.0	a	162	26.0
an	106	26.0	an	53	6.0	an	62	10.0
the	170	41.0	the	664	71.0	the	394	64.0
<b>Sum</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Sum</b>	<b>932</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Sum</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Var. = Variable, Freq. = Frequency, Per% = Percentage

**Table: 5.4. Total percentage of errors of ‘a’, ‘an’, & ‘the’ in all categories**

Total Errors of ‘a’, ‘an’ & ‘the’						
Types of Errors	Variables					
	<i>A</i>		<i>An</i>		<i>The</i>	
	Freq.	Per.%	Freq.	Per.%	Freq.	Per.%
Incorrect Use	134	26.22	106	47.96	170	13.84
Redundant Use	215	42.07	53	23.98	664	54.07
Omission	162	31.7	62	28.05	394	32.08
<b>Sum</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1228</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Tables (5.2-5.4) given above reveal total number of errors and their related percentage in all categories. It is evident from the analysis that the respondents made three types of errors that is, incorrect use, redundant use and omission of articles where the greatest numbers of errors are found in the category *redundant use of articles*. The participants made 932 errors in this category (as per table 5.2).

The total number of errors and their related percentage of each article in all error tendencies are apparent from table 5.3. The high frequency of errors is found in the use of “*the*” in all categories of errors. The total erroneous sum of “*the*” is found 1228-out of 1960 errors (as shown table 5.4).

The greatest number in the use of “*the*” is found in the *redundant category of articles*. Participants made 932 errors in superfluous use of *the* in place of ø (zero article).

High frequency of deviant forms in this category reveals that this domain is likely to be the toughest area for the participants of study. Percentage of deviant sentences where the informants inserted the definite article *the* frequently are as follows:

- i) \*The Mount Everest is one of the peaks of the Himalayas (78%).
- ii) \* It is not easy to be fluent in the English (84%).

- iii) \*The computers are available nowadays (90%).
- iv) One of my aims is to contribute to \*the society in some ways (94%).

The frequency of these erroneous sentences justifies Master's (1990) claim that English article system is one of the most difficult aspects of English grammar for non-native speakers. The plausible reasons for these deviations can be hypercorrection where learners use articles redundantly. In addition, exceptions to the rules in TL may also be another cause for such confusion.

Next to redundant use of articles, the tendency of omit articles was very frequent among the participants. Article *'the'* appeared to be the most problematic article under this category as indicated in table 5.3. The results support the fact that omission of articles is a common finding among L2 learners' acquisition studies. Taylor (1976) claims that even native speakers of English show the tendency to drop the definite article (p.192). The following sentences are the examples where the participants made frequent errors:

- i) Jill plays \*violin in the corner of the room (46%)
- ii) John went to see his uncle to \*hospital (44%)
- iii) \*River Volga flows into Caspian Sea (40%)
- iv) \*Book you want is out of print (38%).
- v) \*Ramayana is a famous epic (36%)

Master (1997) and Parrish (1987) explained such findings as an indication of mastery of zero articles at the initial stages of L2 acquisition. Master (1997, p. 220) practically experienced that, *"the failure to 'the' to mark an identified referent could obviously be the result of L1 transfer"*.

Thomas (1989, p. 349) adopted the term *"more realistic"* approaches claiming that: *"her [-ART] (-ART = participants who lack article system in their L1) participants produced the zero article more frequently (or perhaps...failed to use any article) in 'a' and 'the' contexts"* (cited by Ekiert, M n.d, p, 17-8). Therefore, she proposed that overproduction of zero article may be due to L1 transfer (ibid).

It was observed from the data that informants committed least errors in the category *incorrect use of articles*. The following sentences are examples where the participants were frequently confused:

- i) I bought \*an/the new car yesterday (*a*)
- ii) \*A/an Car is blue (*the*)
- iii) He is \*an/the smart boy (*a*)
- iv) Ceylon is \*a/the Island (*an*)
- v) \*A/an World is a stage where the director is God (*the*)
- vi) Bombay is \*a/ an biggest city of India (*the*)
- vii) His father is \*an/the veterinarian (*a*)

The most important factors in committing these deviations can be insufficient teaching method as well as the learners' inadequate learning and lack of exposure to the target language rules.

### 5.3.1 Discussion

To know how to use English articles properly, the learner should have command over various parts of speech, especially nouns (as count, non-count, definite, postmodified, and generic). In fact, it can be said that learners have major difficulties in classifying nouns under counts and non-counts due to difference between L1 and L2 noun systems as well as exceptions in L2.

To overcome some part of the problem, it seems to be necessary for the learners to identify nouns as one of count, indefinite, postmodified, and generic. Master (1990, p. 465) claims that teaching this concept is neither a good method nor it is possible to overcome all the linguistic and nonlinguistic differences that govern noun classes. In an experiment, Lisovsky, as cited by Master (1990), created an exercise in which he asked his students to identify a noun was count, definite, postmodified, and generic before they selected the correct article. He found little correlation between the learners' ability to classify noun and their choices of correct article. Thus, despite considerable time spent on teaching these distinctions, students in an



exercise failed to identify the correct article. In this regard, various levels of difficulty may be illustrated which are as follows: -

Learners may have difficulties in identifying the difference between countable and uncountable nouns. If there is a difference between countable and uncountable noun systems of English and learners' L1, it can lead to produce errors in such area. For example: *information* and *furniture* are uncountable nouns in English but countable nouns in French and Spanish. In this relation, Todd and Hancock (1986) cited in Rabori (2002, p.195) believe that the difference between countable and uncountable nouns is neither wholly logical nor wholly linguistic. However, a noun normally treated as uncountable may become countable when we refer to a variety. For example, '*Lactose and fructose are both sugars*'; and in a specific amount: '*one sugar or two*'? They finally add that the division between countable and uncountable nouns is language specific and arbitrary. These exceptions, as a result, cause confusion and lead the learners to the misapplication of nouns in different areas.

Another inconsistency may occur in the use of non-count nouns when they change from non-count to count in different contexts. For example '*life*' is generally non-count but in the following context is considered count: "*The quick thinking police officer saved a life*". This exception can be observed among other nouns such as cheese, wine, coffee, chocolate, and so forth (Celce- Murcia and Larsen Freeman's 1999, p. 275).

Moreover, confusion in classification of nouns arises when abstract non-count nouns which appear in singular form may appear in plural form in a certain context. In this connection, Quirk et al (1985) as cited by Rabori (2002:195) add that abstract nouns normally have no plural: music, dirt, homework, etc. but some can be classified as count nouns where they refer to an instance of a given abstract phenomenon: injustices, regrets, kindnesses, pleasures, etc.

There are some other expressions in which abstract nouns are used with article '*a*'. For example: *this is a horrible picture*. In the same way, difficulty arises when singular or plural forms of noun in terms of quantifiers are used equally with count and non-count nouns such as, a lot of, some, any, a great deal, etc. which are used to modify both count or non-counts: some bread, some boys, a lot of time, a lot of

money, a lot of birds, while there are some others which are used to modify either count or non-counts: many boys, much money, a little time, a few boys, little time, few societies, etc. Consequently, these inconsistencies in the use of quantifiers create confusion and it increases the possibility of overgeneralization.

The observation of article system in detail including all inconsistencies and exceptions as well as separation from the class of determiners may bring the misconception that they are different categories. Moreover, definiteness can be conveyed not only by *the* but also by the demonstrative pronouns like *this*, *that*, *those*, *these*, etc. and possessive pronouns or markers such as *my*, *her*, *our* and so on. In this way, one major difficulty is the approaches selected by grammar books to modify L2 rules. There are few attempts in the literature to provide a coherent grammar for teaching English article system. Consequently, one source of confusion is the mode of representation and discussion of the textbooks by teachers. The noteworthy thing is that neither the language teacher refers to these inconsistencies, nor the grammar books emphasize them. In other words, the deficiencies of learning these complexities and inconsistencies for the ESL/EFL are not taken into consideration seriously and in most situations they are neglected.

#### **5.4 Findings of Prepositions**

The use of prepositions is also proved to be another difficult aspect in English grammar for the participants of this study. Generally, L2 learner faces difficulties in using prepositions because of two major reasons as he confuses to assume:

- a) Whether in any construction a preposition is required or not, and
- b) Which preposition to use when one is required?

All error tendencies of article can be seen at a glance in table 5.4 and 5.5 which are as follows.

**Table: 5.5. Total errors of prepositions regarding all categories**

<b>Total No. of Errors of Prepositions</b>		
<b>Types of Errors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Prepositions of Time	561	35.0
Prepositions of Place	363	22.0
Prepositions of Motion	706	43.0
<b>Sum</b>	<b>1630</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table: 5.6. Total errors of each variable in prepositions of Time**

<b>Total Errors of Prepositions of Time</b>		
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>At</i>	114	21.0
<i>On</i>	172	31.0
<i>In</i>	120	21.0
<i>For</i>	77	13.0
<i>From</i>	25	5.0
<i>Since</i>	41	7.0
<i>During</i>	12	2.0
<b>Sum</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table: 5.7. Total errors of each variable in prepositions of Place**

<b>Total Errors of Prepositions of Place</b>		
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
At	117	32.0
On	111	31.0
In	98	27.0
To	37	10.0
<b>Sum</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table: 5.8. Total errors of each variable in prepositions of Motion**

<b>Total Errors of Prepositions of Motion</b>		
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
At	106	15.0
On	53	8.0
In	118	17.0
From	62	8.0
To	66	9.0
Into	111	16.0
Onto	61	8.0
Above	35	5.0
Off	33	5.0
Over	25	4.0
Below	21	3.0
By	15	2.0
<b>Sum</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table: 5.9. The errors of high frequency in prepositions**

<b>Variables of High Frequency</b>						
<b>Types of Prepositions</b>						
	<i>At</i>	<i>On</i>	<i>In</i>	<i>Into</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>From</i>
	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Freq.</b>
<i>Time</i>	114	172	120	---	---	25
<i>Place</i>	117	111	98	---	37	---
<i>Motion</i>	106	53	118	111	66	62
<i>Sum</i>	<b>337</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>87</b>

Table (5.5) reveals total number of errors and their related percentage in all categories. It is evident from the table that respondents made the greatest numbers of errors in the category of prepositions of motion i.e. 706 errors out of 1630. The total number of errors of each variable in prepositions of time, place and motion can be seen from table 5.6 to 5.8. The highest frequency of errors is found in the use of “at”, “in”, & “on” (as revealed table 5.9).

Like articles, the same error tendencies were found in the use of prepositions: incorrect use, redundant use and omission of prepositions. The sources of these errors may be both mother tongue interference (MTI) of learners and analogy resulting from L2 rules.

Incorrect use of prepositions may be affected by different factors, two of which usually are the teaching procedures and the mode of presentation by grammar textbooks. Because the rules that grammar books define and use to modify the prepositions usage cannot be put into restricted boundaries, it seems very difficult for language teachers to incorporate a systematic procedure in order to teach and present them properly. Likewise, the presentations are highly influenced by some categories such as syntactic proprieties, contextual implications, and discourse categories, etc.

Redundant use of prepositions is another tendency in which the respondents have not showed their success to handle. It is evident from table 5.2 & 5.3 and is obvious in the following sentences:

- i) I saw her *\*in/on* last Sunday evening.
- ii) We stayed there *\*for/in* all week.
- iii) We entered *\*in/into* the room.
- iv) When I reached *\*at/into* my classroom.
- v) John went *\*at/in/* home.

The possible causes of these errors may be learners’ MTI, where incorrectly inserted prepositions may have been transferred from the informants’ L1 and being under the

influence of overgeneralization of L2 rules, in which a large number of variations might be observed that obscure the systems of prepositional rules.

Omission of a needed preposition is the last category of errors where respondents of this research made use of little knowledge in the correct application of rules due to which they failed to use any preposition in a required context. However, the lowest numbers of omission are found in this category, it indicates that they are less proficient in supplying prepositions in necessary situations. Frequently, participants failed to insert prepositions in the following sentences:

- i) \*This treaty was signed November 2, 1962 (on)
- ii) \*He never comes to class time (on)
- iii) \*They live 140 David Street (at)
- iv) \*Meet me the bus stop (at)
- v) \*Please pick the newspaper up the floor (off)
- vi) \*The air plane flew the city (over)
- vii) \*We got the car (into)

Apparently, the major source of these deviations may be traced back to the direct mother tongue transfer where the difference and lack of such words in L1 of non-native speaker may hinder learning and cause confusion. In the same way, L2 rule inconsistency play a very significant role in creating confusion in applying the correct usage. The lack of understanding the rules with exceptions to the usage lead the learners to confusion due to which they make deviation to the norms.

#### **5.4.1 Discussion**

English prepositions are often vague and confusing, even for native speakers. It is extremely hard for ESL/EFL learners to learn the nuances of all English prepositions. It is fact that besides native language interference, there are several factors that influence L2 learning which persist in the rules of second language itself. L2 rules including inconsistencies, exceptions, as well as variations in the function of TL systems create confusion at various levels. These levels of difficulty can be described in detail briefly as follows:

### 5.4.1.1 Variations in the Usage

Learning prepositions is not so easy because of variation in their form, function, meaning and distribution. In this relation, Swan (1982) as cited by Rabori (2002) contends that learning prepositions is difficult because most of them have several functions and there are many verbs, nouns and adjectives which use particular preposition. For example verbs such as (*rely on, consist of, look at, wait for*, etc.); nouns (*in case of, on account of, to my mind*, etc.); adjectives (*free from, afraid of, sorry for*, etc.) therefore, chances are high to deviate from the rules. Though there are so many limitations, there are no explicit rules that can help the learners to use prepositions correctly, and the problem is made more complicated when the learners come to know that there are different positions for prepositions and any change in the position may influence the meaning heavily.

The meaning of prepositions is also difficult to learn in the sense that it is more difficult to describe prepositional meaning in terms of certain names or labels. In the same way, preposition distribution and application do not follow clear-cut rules and to present general rules without exceptions and inconsistencies practically is impossible. Therefore, one source of deviations is the rule inconsistency. Besides, most of the prepositions have several different functions according to the context and other considerations. For example, according to Dirven as cited by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999), *at* extends from an orientation . . . to cause such as:

Point as place: at the station,

Time point: at six o' clock

State: at work

Area: good at guessing

Manner: at full speed

Circumstance: at these words (he left)

Cause: laugh at, irritation at

(Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman 1999, p. 207).

#### 5.4.1.2 Prepositions and Particles

Next inconsistency lies when prepositions are used with other grammatical categories such as verb and a preposition (*decides on, stand for, look at, etc.*), adjectives followed by prepositions (*afraid of the dark* and *capable of doing something, etc.*), constructions composed of a preposition followed by an adjective which are often equal to adverbs in meaning (*in private = privately, of late = lately, in vain = vainly, etc.*), prepositions followed by another preposition (*from behind*), idiomatic construction with two prepositions (*in compliance with*) and construction with prepositions that are followed by *That* clauses like, “*Call me in the event that there is a problem*” (Cowan 2008, p.147-152).

An additional problem faced by ESL/EFL learners using their inability to differentiate between adverbial particles and the prepositions. In this regard, the difference between their L1 and the TL language rules may play a big role. However, there is a large number of forms which may function as either prepositions (*in the bed*) or particles (*gave up, slept in, etc.*). Even there are many forms which can be used as both the difference of which can only be made on the basis of its accent. But the rules of L2 in this category are also complicated, inconsistent and invariable which make the task of teaching, discussing, and presenting them a very complicated task. Thus, this complexity is one of the main difficulties for both the learners as well as the teachers.

#### 5.4.1.3 Exceptions and Uncertainties

Exceptions and uncertainties in a great deal govern the prepositional usage in English. There are some exceptions with phrases, such as: *at this/that time, on this/that occasion, etc.* also the exceptional use of *for* when it comes first in the sentence, or follows a negative. For example: *I have not seen him for eight years* (Geoffrey et al. 2002, p. 89-90) and the use of a preposition in non deictic context of *last, next, this, like: on the last Sunday of the month*. Besides, the exceptional use of *at* with *home, downtown*, and *in* with pro-verb in static verbs such as ‘*he is at home*’ or *Yes. He is (in) there*. Consequently these exceptions and uncertainties cause confusion and lead the learners to commit errors.



#### **5.4.1.4 Variations in Presenting the Rules**

Finally, the most frustrating challenge is to teach prepositions. Most of the textbooks do not mention prepositions extensively in any way and therefore do not facilitate the teaching of them. While other textbooks only teach prepositions at certain levels as teaching spatial and temporal uses separately from each other. Even in some grammar books prepositions are used as conjunction with other grammatical units but they are not explained in any detail. When prepositions are taught in the text, they are usually allotted a page or less. With no textbook to rely on, the teacher often encourages the students simply to memorize the prepositions. Grammar books also present prepositions in different styles and discuss them from different points of view. Some prefer to present with verbs, adjectives, and nouns, with which they associate others, may consider the alphabetic order or discuss them according to their meaning. Some others discuss them by classifying them under certain subjects and topics such as the prepositions of time, place and motion, etc. irrespective of the context in which they occur. However, the area of diversity and mode of presentation is so varied and diversified that the teaching and modification of prepositions have been introduced as one of the most complicated tasks in the course of language teaching.

### **5.5 Findings of Error Analysis Process**

The analysis of the compiled errors reveals some noteworthy facts. The data having been presented in tables (5.2-5.9) demonstrate drastic fluctuation among the areas of errors. In fact, the inconsistency here reveals the traces of respondents' difficulty in certain areas. The difference indicates that major areas with which the average learners have to struggle with, fall under two categories, the definite article and prepositions of motion. On the basis of frequency of culminating errors related to the areas of articles and prepositions, it can be asserted that the more the rule complexity and inconsistency grow, the more the numbers of errors grow. A lot of complexities and exceptions can be observed among the rules that govern articles and prepositions.

Major causes of errors may be due to the language learners' own learning strategies. These strategies emerge specifically from overgeneralization of TL rules,

simplification by reducing some difficult elements from the TL, and avoidance in which learners avoid some difficult TL items in order to escape from the fear of making errors. All these specific strategies and others like these are commonly interconnected with each other in such a way that whenever the learners feel the need, they employ one of the available strategies according to the context.

An interconnected relationship among rule inconsistency, overgeneralization, simplification, avoidance, and other types of errors can be established. Whenever the learners face any uncertainty to use their desired linguistic forms, they prefer to resort to one of the few strategies to overcome the problem. The selected strategy may vary from overgeneralization of the rules to simplification or avoidance. Depending on the context, the learners prefer avoidance to overgeneralization when they feel that deleting specific features does not damage the basic and fundamental rules of English grammar. This fact is evident from the analysis of errors of articles and prepositions. When the rules are considered different & consequently more difficult from the learners' L1, simplification is possible to occur. On the other hand, when the learners are not sure of the usage of any linguistic forms, they try to overgeneralize the already known rules to the new context. If they cannot find any familiar rule in their second language conventions, they may stick to simplification. This phenomenon may happen by deleting some function words from their conventions. The employed strategy here is avoidance the aim of which is to simplify the complexity of the linguistic production.

In fact, most of the exceptions and inconsistencies exist among these areas. In other words, the rules that modify the usage of articles and prepositions are complex, obscure, and decontextualised. All these deficiencies and inconsistencies lead the learners to resort to one of the available strategies to fulfill their requirements. It can also be asserted that rule inconsistency in case of function words like articles and prepositions ends either in overgeneralization and simplification or avoidance hypothesis. However, it is possible to conclude that overgeneralization, simplification and avoidance are interconnected issues and they affect each other heavily. It would not be logical and practical to assign one of these sources and causes as the major source of deviations. Finally, it can be concluded that second language learners commit various errors in their linguistic production, the sources of

which are rather hard to determine. In other words, the predictions of these errors are not so simple or easy.

## **5.6 Conclusion of the Chapter**

The findings are evident of the fact that English articles and prepositions have been proved to be problematic aspects of grammar among the learners of this study. It can be concluded that learners of this research have much problems with the definite article "*the*" and prepositions "*in*", "*on*", & "*at*". Their MTI and the effect of learning strategies such as overgeneralization, simplification, avoidance hypothesis in their linguistic production have been interpreted and predicted as possible causes of confusion. The chapter has find out that though the respondents have a good knowledge in the domain of linguistic phenomena, they could not show the positive results. The levels of difficulty that persisted in the use English articles have been described particularly in terms of classification of nouns under the category of counts and non-counts. The findings of prepositions have been discussed on the levels of difficulty such as variation in their form, function, meaning, distribution and the use of prepositions with different categories of grammar. Thus, in order to develop accuracy, the strategies and activities suggested in the following chapters will take care of difficulties of the learners.

*Chapter-6*

*Conclusion*  
*and*  
*Implications*

## **6.1 Introduction of the Chapter**

This chapter presents an overview of the topic under study. It also recommends certain implications and suggestions which are based on the results of this research. Further, it also states some of the limitations of this study and provides suggestions for further research. Finally, the chapter ends with some concluding remarks on the utility of the present work.

## **6.2 Overview of the Study**

As the title of the thesis suggests, the aim of the present study is to investigate errors committed by undergraduate ESL students at AMU in their use of English articles and prepositions. The motivation to undertake this research has emerged from the researcher's personal observation that the above mentioned students have limited knowledge in their writing skills which lack several grammatical devices, including articles and prepositions. Subsequently, a survey was carried out to find out the students' error tendencies, frequencies of their errors, types, and possible causes. Also students' linguistic and academic backgrounds were analyzed. The findings of the survey justify fact that the explicit teaching of writing skill in academic settings is of paramount importance.

The present study has been divided into six chapters. The first chapter has introduced the background of the study which also includes aim and scope, problem, significance, method adopted and organization of the study. Chapter second has presented the theoretical underpinning of EA and has provided a brief review of related literature available on the topic under study. The third chapter has sketched the research design and methodology proposed to carry out this investigation. Chapter four has presented the analysis of the data of investigation. It is devoted to analyze the errors committed by the participants of this study. It has also given the explanation and interpretation of the findings obtained through the survey. Chapter five has explained the findings obtained from the analysis of data. The findings have been described from such points of view that posit various levels of difficulty.

### **6.3 Remedial Approaches for Teaching Articles and Prepositions**

On the basis of the data analysis, it can be concluded that committing errors is a natural phenomena and an inevitable part of second/foreign language learning process. From the pedagogical point of view, it can be said that learner's errors enable teachers to infer the nature of the learner's knowledge of articles and prepositions at a given stage in his learning process and discover what s/he still has to learn. It is important to focus more on practical activities than on providing the students with pages of theoretical explanation on articles and prepositions. These aspects of English seem to be very difficult because they all seem to have many uses. Therefore, they can be mastered only through memorization and practice. In order to facilitate teaching of these two components, the teacher should manage proper practical activities in the ESL/EFL classrooms. It is recommended that for the sake of learners' awareness towards these two aspects i.e. articles and prepositions, the teacher should provide an environment in which the learners learn through practice. Some relevant strategies regarding these components are suggested in the following subsections.

#### **6.3.1 Strategies for Teaching English Articles**

Some linguists (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982) have argued that English articles are unteachable and can be acquired only through exposure. Other philosophers like Pica (1983), McEldowney (1977), Whitman (1974) and Master (1986, 1997, 2002) propose that this complex system can be taught through appropriate and coherent constructed grammar exercise (cited by Atay 2010, p. 61). According to Cowan (2008 p. 229), articles are a persistent problem that cannot be eradicated through coverage in English language courses. This is due to the fact that the opportunities to practice articles provided by most of the textbooks are limited largely to fill-in-the-blank exercises. As the usage of articles is governed by certain rules, the learners should be taught the rules governing use of the definite and indefinite articles. Intensive drills and exercises should be presented in the classroom on articles. In

order to make teaching and learning English articles easy, this study suggests some important implications and relevant activities. They are as follows:

- i) First of all the learners should be made clear that the use of articles for countable and uncountable nouns are different. In this regard, two lists containing both countable and uncountable nouns should be provided to the learners. Then the teacher should explain that count nouns have plural forms and can be preceded by numbers and quantifiers like *several, a few, a little, many*, etc. before them and that only count nouns can have the indefinite article, *a*, or *an* in front of them. And it should also be explained that when something is mentioned for the first time, *a* or *an* should be used and if it is mentioned again, *the* is used.
- ii) A list of proper nouns is also recommended to be given to the learners and they should be instructed that these nouns do not take articles. However, there may be exceptions where these nouns take definite article. They should also be instructed that proper nouns in singular form do not take the definite article but they take that in plural forms such as *the Azores, the U.S.*, etc. (Cowan 2008, p. 229). In this regard, a flow chart should be provided to the learners with the classification of nouns (see appendix I, fig. 2. A). For more elaboration Master's (1990) binary system of teaching articles can be used where article use is reduced to a meaning contrast between "*identification*" (marked by *the*) and "*classification*" (marked by *a (an)/zero*). It can be shown through a flow chart in which the classification /identification dichotomy is followed by the count/non-count dichotomy and singular/ plural considerations and examples (see appendix I, fig. 1.B).
- iii) The teacher should explain that *a*, or *an* with non-count nouns may be used with partitives (quantity words) but this is not allowed before uncountable nouns like milk, soup, advice, etc. Such expressions like *a milk, two soups, an advice*, etc. are not used generally. But expressions

like *a carton of milk, two tins of soup or a piece of advice* are the accepted use.

- iv) In order to make ESL learners understand proper use of the definite article '*the*', the teacher may distinguish between generic and non-generic uses of articles where the distinction between specific and nonspecific noun phrases (NPs) should be made. The teacher should make the learners clear that a *specific* noun phrase (NP) is one in which the identity of individual member is clear. Such as, "*the tiger escaped from the zoo*". Here, a particular tiger i.e. the one that is in zoo is being referred to, so its identity is clear. A *nonspecific* noun phrase is one where the identity of a member of a set is not clear for example, "*have you ever seen a lion in the wild?*" (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 278). The teacher may make this distinction clear by providing the learners with exercises on conversation where the students should be asked to complete the blank spaces (as shown figure 1.C), and also provide the words that would or would not take the definite article '*the*'. Words like bed, college, home, prison, etc. (as figure 1. D) are suitable to use.
- v) The teachers may assign class/home work of various kinds such as: filling in the missing articles, picking out the right articles in the sentences and so on. Also, the sentences having erroneous use of articles may be given to the learners for correction. It is advisable that the learners should be proceed from simple exercises to complex activities. The exercises may be given in isolated sentences or paragraph form. In order to have an idea, some significant exercises along with their answers have been designed in figures no. 1.E, F & G.

### **6.3.2 Strategies for Teaching English Prepositions**

Students should be encouraged to practice more forms and patterns in the target language. Cowan (2008) suggests that ESL students should be taught prepositions



even if their level of proficiency is good. Their ability to use prepositions correctly in different contexts will improve if they are periodically presented with new meanings for prepositions and asked to create original sentences that reflect these meanings. As prepositions make logical sense, their usage almost depends on the logical image and context. Therefore, they may be learnt logically as well as through memorization and practice. Teachers should teach English prepositions through communicative based method; and should promote authentic materials to enable their students practice the use of English. The most difficult prepositions found in this investigation are “*in*”, “*on*” and “*at*” (as per table 5.6 in the preceding chapter). These are basic and general prepositions of place and time. These prepositions seem to be simple; however, explaining these items becomes difficult in the ESL/EFL context. In order to facilitate the teaching of these and other prepositions, the current research suggests some recommendations and relevant strategies by designing and describing various engaging activities. As the present study investigated three types of prepositions i.e. prepositions of time, place and motion, therefore it implicates strategies separately for each type. These are presented in the following points.

- i) For teaching prepositions of time, the teacher should provide a list containing the prepositions related to time and dates with their meaning and usage so that the students are aware of these items. Then the teacher should explain that *in* is used with year (in 1998), period of the day (in the morning) month (in January), and seasons (in the summer) while, *on* is used with days of the week (on Tuesday) and *at* is used with time (at 4:00). The teacher further can make it clear that we can say *Beon time* but not *Arrive on 6:00*. It can be said *Christmas is on December 25<sup>th</sup>* but it cannot be said ‘*Christmas is on December*’. It can be said *on Monday* but not *on the morning*. The prepositions should be taught in isolated sentences first then in paragraph to make the learners understand the contextual usage. For getting practice, the sentences with examples should be given to the learners on the basis of which the exercises (as given in appendix 2, figure A.I-II) may be practiced in the classroom.

- ii) In order to teach prepositions of place and motion, the best method is to use visual aids in which real objects, photographs, pictures and diagrams are recommended. Teachers may try to use visual/active approach because a picture is worth a thousand words. A picture drawn to show the action of the word would ease out teacher's task. Therefore, in the current research some activities have been designed with figures and diagrams for teaching prepositions of place and motion. It is advisable that teachers may bring different pictures to demonstrate the usage of specific prepositions into the classroom. For example: the teacher can draw or design a picture or diagram of objects like apples, books, rulers, dusters, ball, etc on the blackboard where specific prepositions like *on*, *in* and *at* can be illustrated. For instance, the dice is on the table, ball is in the box and ball is at the cross (as shown fig. 2. B. I). Other prepositions like *above*, *over*, *under* and *below* may also be taught in the same manner (as indicated fig 2.B.II). Similar technique may be applied to the teaching of prepositions of motion where specific prepositions like *off*, *to*, *from*, *onto*, *into* and *across* can be illustrated (see fig. 2.C.I & II). The teacher may also download some relevant photos/pictures for specific use of prepositions and can explain that, for the picture . . . , the preposition . . . is correct. Some such exercises have been designed and shown in appendix 2 (figures 2.D.I-II). These types of activities are relevant for practice in the classroom.
- iii) Teachers can circulate pictures of public places, an office or a kitchen room and other useful pictures then ask the students to write a description of the given pictures. Students have to describe the place, position, and direction of the mentioned objects in the pictures. In this regard, pictures given in figures 2. E. I-III, are quite useful.
- iv) Furthermore, an easy way of getting learners to associate special (place and motion) meaning to prepositions is making use of maps. A simplified map of one's town or school can be made. Then each student is provided

with a copy of those maps and they are asked to trace the path with their pencils as it is described. For example: *I am at the bank on Main Street, and I want to go to the market. I go out of the bank, and I make a right turn. At the corner, I go across Main Street. I turn right again. The market is two blocks down the street, on Elliot Street. It is next to the laundromat. I go in the front door* (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 419).

- v) Teachers can assign class/home work with different exercises such as: filling in the missing prepositions, circling the right preposition and finding errors in the sentences, etc. The assignments on the description of their favorite place, a birthday party, a letter to a pen friend, an emergency event or they may also be asked to describe their classes or their bedrooms where students have to describe the position of furniture and equipment in their classrooms or their bedrooms using prepositions of time, place and motion. It is advisable that the learners should be given simple exercises first and then they should be exposed to complex activities. The exercises may be given in isolated sentences or paragraph form. Some such exercises have been designed in appendix 2, figures 2. F. I-V & 2.G.I-II.

## **6.4 Implications of the Findings**

The findings of this study may have implications for students, teachers and course designers. To improve the ESL learners' ability in the use of the investigated areas of English grammar, the following implications should be taken into consideration:

### **6.4.1 Implications for Teachers and Course Designers**

- i) Classroom teaching should engage the students in such activities in which they must think critically, negotiate for meanings and use the target language in meaningful contexts in the new ways;

- ii) The syllabus for developing writing skill should take into consideration the fact that students are made to write in the class extensively. The students must be able to show their contribution in written discourse;
- iii) The final and most important point is that a one month course, training sessions, workshops on the ESL learners' grammar difficulties and problems should be organized periodically at AMU. Such training courses will heighten the learners' competence level.

#### **6.4.2 Implications for Learners**

- i) The students should develop good writing habits in English by practicing the activities in the classroom and at home also.
- ii) The students should try to develop the spirit of doing writing activities in group or team work. It will enhance their confidence level.
- iii) Besides textbooks or course books, the students should try to learn English through audio visual aids.

#### **6.5 Limitations of the Study**

Generally, every research posits limitations in its scope. Most of the ESL/EFL studies have been conducted within a limited area in order to be specific in the area of study undertaken. Therefore, the present investigation is precise and specific in its scope and area of research. The study has attempted to analyze the important factors that contribute towards the poor performance of UG students at AMU yet, it cannot claim to have made an exhaustive discussion on all the relevant issues. In brief, following are the limitations of this research:

- i) Firstly, the sample of population of the present study was limited to one hundred participants only. They cannot be considered the whole population of the undergraduate students studying at AMU.
- ii) Secondly, male and female respondents of this research were mixed in order to analyze their errors in a single data.

- iii) Thirdly, the questionnaire was also limited. English grammar is a very vast area and it has eight parts of speech from which only two aspects i.e. articles and prepositions were selected for the present research.
- iv) English is introduced at AMU from the primary level and is taught as a compulsory subject up to the UG level, but the present study is limited to UG level only; and

## **6.6 Suggestions for Further Research**

In spite of the great number of studies conducted in error analysis in the relevant fields, there still exists a surprising level of confusion in area related to the ESL/EFL learners' use of a language. This study suggests the following possible research areas in the articles and prepositions:

- i) The high frequency of errors made by the ESL participants in this research reveals that these areas are more problematic for these learners. Therefore, more studies should be taken up in these areas for getting a better understanding of the nature and difficulties.
- ii) A contrastive study on English articles and prepositions with other languages like Hind and Urdu can be conducted at the same level.
- iii) This study is investigated on the undergraduate ESL learners (advanced level) therefore; the need was felt to undertake the ESL learners' difficulties at the secondary or primary level students studying English at AMU.

## **6.7 Conclusion of the Chapter**

This chapter has discussed some relevant implications and has introduced various strategies and activities for teaching and learning English articles and prepositions in the ESL context. It has suggested that the articles and prepositions should be taught as isolated categories of English grammar with elaboration as other grammatical categories like tense and sentences are taught, instead of introducing

within other grammatical categories. And it is also advisable that special emphasis should be given to the context of discourse for the sake of their proper usage. For a successful academic setting, all the methodologies related to accuracy development that have been discussed so far should be incorporated in the language learning-teaching programme. It is hoped that these strategies will contribute a lot in the teaching-learning process in academic settings.

*Reference Section*

*Appendices*

## Appendix - I: Activities for Articles

- I. A. Teaching the classification of nouns (Adapted from Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 272).

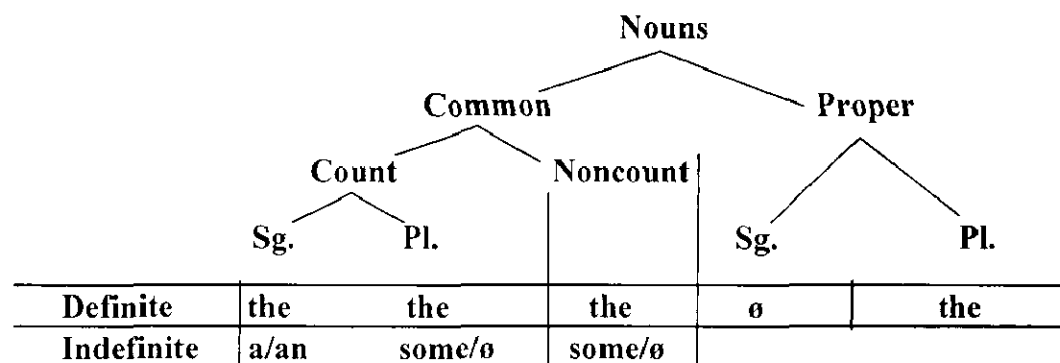


Fig. I.A.

- I.B. Teaching the definite and indefinite articles through Master's (1990, p.471) modified categories within Binary System: (Adapted from Master 2002, p. 336)

Fig. 1. B. C. Binary System

Classification [a, Ø1]	Identification [the, Ø2]
<b>Count/Noncount</b> a book; Ø1 books/Ø1 wine	<b>Count/Noncount</b> the book; the books/the wine
<b>First mention</b> a photograph	<b>Subsequent mention</b> the photograph
<b>Descriptive adjectives</b> a first step a best man an only child	<b>Ranking adjectives</b> the first step the best film the only chance
<b>Deining relative clause</b> a car that gets 50 mpg	<b>Limiting relative clause</b> the car that won the race
<b>Partitive of-phrase</b> a cup of coffee a temperature of 212 degrees	<b>Descriptive of-phrase</b> the diameter of a circle the temperature of the sun
<b>General characteristics</b> A squirrel (has a tail.) (Ø1) Squirrels (have a tail.)	<b>Generic the</b> The squirrel (is becoming a pest.)
<b>New knowledge</b> a moon a catastrophe	<b>Shared (given) knowledge</b> the moon the catastrophe
<b>Classified proper nouns</b> a Mr. Jones (to see you)	<b>Identified proper nouns</b> the Mr. Jones (you met last night)
<b>Idiomatic phrases</b> have a cow; eat (Ø1)	<b>Idiomatic phrases</b> crow rise to the occasion



**1. C. Complete the conversations. Put in the nouns and decide if you need "the".**

**1. Rachel:** Did your family have a dog when you were younger?

**Vicky:** No, thank goodness. I'm afraid of.....  
(dogs). I didn't like..... (dogs) that were running around in  
the park yesterday. I was afraid they were going to attack me.

**2. Melanie:** You shouldn't drive so much, Mark. You know that ..... (cars)  
cause .....(pollution), don't you?

**Mark:** Yes, but ..... (cars) these days are cleaner than they  
used to be. Isn't it..... (aeroplanes) that are mainly  
responsible for..... (pollution) of the atmosphere?

**3. Melanie:** I've put some bread out in the garden for .....  
(birds). **Tom:** You like..... (birds), don't you?

**Melanie:** Yes, I do. I love ..... (wildlife), in fact. I'd much  
rather live in the country if I could.

**4. Laura:** You're always reading books about .....  
(history), aren't you?

**Harriet:** It was always my favorite subject. Do you know anything  
about..... (history) of this area?

**Laura:** No, but if you like looking round.....  
(museums)and.....(old buildings), we could find out about it  
together.

(Adapted from Eastwood, J. 1992, p. 202)

**Answers:** 1) dogs, the dogs, 2) cars, pollution, cars, aeroplanes, the pollution, 3) the  
birds, birds, wildlife, 4) history, the history, museums, old buildings

**1. D: Complete the sentences. Use *in, at* or *to* and these words: *bed, church, college, factory, home, hospital, library, prison, shop, town, work*. Decide if you need '*the*':**

1. The weather was awful. We stayed.....all weekend.
2. Melanie had an early night last night. She was..... at ten.
3. Emma's friend has just had a baby. Emma is going ..... to visit her.
4. Vicky's parents are religious. They go..... every Sunday.
5. Laura doesn't like her job. She just goes.....to earn some money.
6. I've read these books. I'm taking them back.....
7. The man who did the robbery is no longer..... He was let out last month.
8. Jessica is a student. She's.....
9. It's very quiet .....when they've turned all the machines off.

**Answers:** 1) at home, 2) in bed, 3) to the hospital, 4) to church, 5) to work,  
6) to the library, 7) in prison, 8) at college, 9) in the factory,

**1. E: Choose whether each sentence needs an indefinite article (*a, an*), a definite article (*the*), or no article ( $\emptyset$ ).**

1. He asked me \_\_\_\_\_ very hard question.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ question that he asked me was easy.
3. Have you seen \_\_\_\_\_ my scarf?
4. Could you please pass me \_\_\_\_\_ salt?
5. Is there \_\_\_\_\_ good restaurant around here?
6. \_\_\_\_\_ restaurant that my friend owns is very good.
7. I have several \_\_\_\_\_ good friends.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ USA is a beautiful country.

9. I'll see you in \_\_\_\_\_ week!
10. I'm on \_\_\_\_\_ vacation until Monday.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ church on the corner is progressive.
12. Miss Lin speaks \_\_\_\_\_ Chinese.
13. One of the students said, "\_\_\_\_\_ professor is late today."
14. Eli likes to play \_\_\_\_\_ volleyball.
15. My daughter is learning to play \_\_\_\_\_ violin at her school.
16. Please give me \_\_\_\_\_ cake that is on the counter.
17. I lived on \_\_\_\_\_ Main Street when I first came to town.
18. Albany is the capital of \_\_\_\_\_ New York State.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ apple a day keeps the doctor away.
20. Our neighbors have \_\_\_\_\_ cat and \_\_\_\_\_ dog.

**Answers:** 1) *a*, 2) *the* 3)  $\emptyset$ , 4) *the*, 5) *a*, 6) *the*, 7)  $\emptyset$ , 8) *the*, 9) *a*, 10)  $\emptyset$ , 11) *the*,  
12)  $\emptyset$ , 13) *the*, 14)  $\emptyset$ , 15) *the*, 16) *the*, 17)  $\emptyset$ , 18)  $\emptyset$ , 19) *an*, 20) *a*, *a*

Retrieved from: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/2/1/12>. Accessed on:  
24/02/2015.

**1. F: Complete the following exercise with *a /an* or *the* articles. Put  $\emptyset$ , if no article is needed.**

According to \_\_\_\_\_ National Weather Service, \_\_\_\_\_ cyclones are \_\_\_\_\_ areas of circulating winds that rotate counterclockwise in \_\_\_\_\_ Northern Hemisphere and clockwise in \_\_\_\_\_ Southern Hemisphere. They are generally accompanied by some kind of \_\_\_\_\_ precipitation and by \_\_\_\_\_ stormy weather, \_\_\_\_\_ tornadoes and \_\_\_\_\_ hurricanes are \_\_\_\_\_ types of cyclones, as are \_\_\_\_\_ typhoons, which are \_\_\_\_\_ storms that occur in \_\_\_\_\_ western Pacific Ocean. \_\_\_\_\_ hurricane is \_\_\_\_\_ cyclone that forms over \_\_\_\_\_ tropical oceans and seas and has \_\_\_\_\_ winds of at least seventy-four miles \_\_\_\_\_ hour. \_\_\_\_\_ hurricane

rotates in \_\_\_\_\_ shape of \_\_\_\_\_ oval or \_\_\_\_\_ circle. \_\_\_\_\_ hurricanes can cause \_\_\_\_\_ great environmental damage. \_\_\_\_\_ Hurricane Andrew, which hit \_\_\_\_\_ coasts of Louisiana and southern Florida in August 1992, caused \_\_\_\_\_ extreme devastation. In terms of \_\_\_\_\_ environmental damage, \_\_\_\_\_ Hurricane Andrew is one of \_\_\_\_\_ most devastating hurricanes ever to hit \_\_\_\_\_ United States. Fourteen people died because of \_\_\_\_\_ Andrew's effects.

**Answers:** the, ø, ø, the, ø, ø, ø, ø, ø, ø, ø, the, a, a, ø, ø, an, a, the, an, a, ø, ø, ø, the, ø, ø, ø, the, the, ø,

Retrieved from: <http://www.grammarbank.com/articles-exercises.html>. Accessed on: 24/02/2015.

**1. G: Correct the following sentences:**

1. She is studying the medicine

.....

2. He wants to be doctor.

.....

3. I like the apples in general.

.....

4. I love the classical music.

.....

5. Their house is by sea.

.....

6. We enjoy eating some raw fish.

.....

7. Have you visited the Africa?

.....

8. The Lake Superior is the largest of the Great Lakes.

.....

9. They went jogging in the Central Park.

.....

10. Have you ever seen Pacific Ocean?

.....

11. Nile is longest river in Africa.

.....

12. Its time for me to go to the bed.

.....

(Adapted from Jones, Leo1992, p. 40 & 44)

**Answers:** 1) medicine, 2) a doctor, 3) apples, 4) classical music, 5) by the sea,  
8) the raw fish, 9) Africa, 10) Lake Superior, 11) Central Park, 13) the Nile, 14) bed,  
15)

## Appendix - II: Activities for Prepositions

### 2. Teaching of Prepositions of Time

#### 2.A.I: Fill in the correct prepositions –

- i) Let us meet \_\_\_\_\_ 6. 00. P.m.
- ii) The clock strikes twelve \_\_\_\_\_ midday/noon/midnight
- iii) He has coffee \_\_\_\_\_ the morning, tea \_\_\_\_\_ the afternoon and evening.
- iv) The condemned man was shot \_\_\_\_\_ sunrise/dawn.
- v) I have class \_\_\_\_\_ Monday.
- vi) I was born \_\_\_\_\_ May 3, 1982.

Answers: at, at, in, in, in, at, on, on.

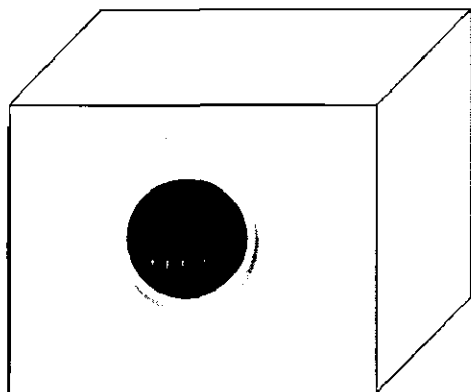
#### 2.A. II: Complete the following paragraph by inserting correct prepositions *in, on* and *at*:

In the United States, the fall holiday season begins \_\_\_\_\_ Thanksgiving Day, the fourth Thursday \_\_\_\_\_ November. Originally a day of thanks for good harvests, it is celebrated with a big dinner, turkey being the traditional main course. Christmas comes \_\_\_\_\_ December 25, about a month after thanksgiving. \_\_\_\_\_ Christmas, people give each other gifts and send Christmas cards. Children especially look forward to this season. New Year's Eve, December 31, comes a week after Christmas. \_\_\_\_\_ New Year's Eve, people have gay parties to celebrate the end of the old year and the beginning of the new. This is the end of holiday season. Easter comes \_\_\_\_\_ March or April. This is a religious holiday, and it also celebrates the coming of spring. \_\_\_\_\_ Easter, Children dye eggs bright colors. They receive gifts of basket containing toy rabbits or chickens and candy eggs. \_\_\_\_\_ Easter Sunday, many people go to church. It is also a traditional time for women to buy new clothes. \_\_\_\_\_ July fourth comes American Independence Day. It is celebrated with fireworks, picnics and patriotic speeches. Labor Day comes \_\_\_\_\_ the end of summer, \_\_\_\_\_ the first Monday \_\_\_\_\_ September. \_\_\_\_\_ Labor Day, people have their last summer holiday before setting down for the fall and winter.

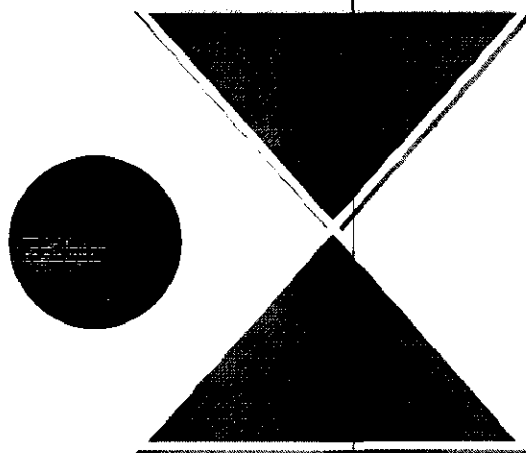
(Adapted from Macmillan 1964, p. 52-3).

Answers: on, in, on, at, on, in, at, on, on, at, on, in, on

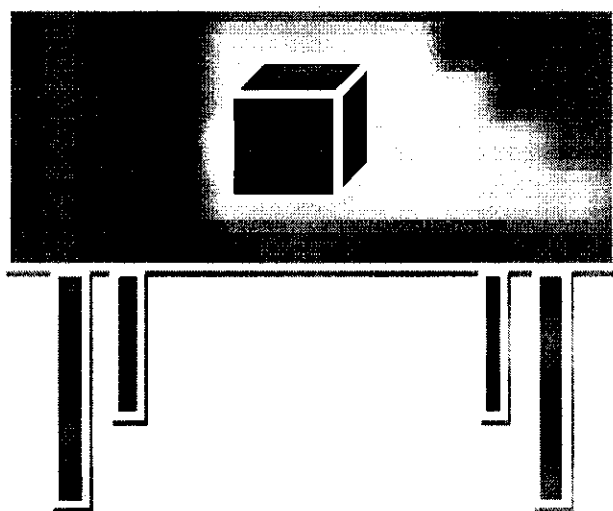
**2.B.I: Teaching Prepositions of Place 'in', 'on' and 'at'**



**The Ball is in the Box**



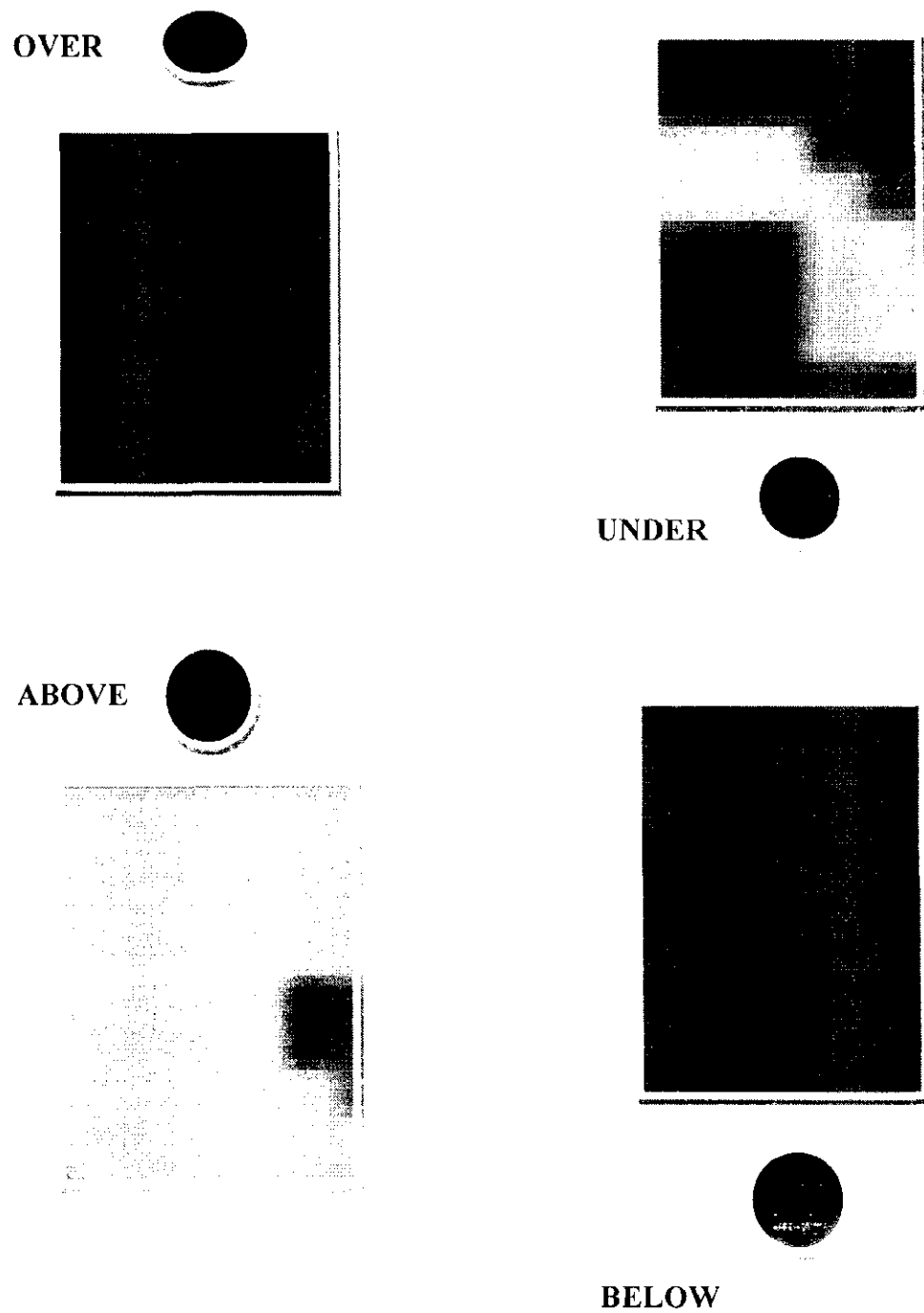
**The Ball is at the Cross**



**Dice in on the Table**

**Fig.2. B.I**

**2.B.II: Teaching Prepositions of Place: *Over, Under, Below & Above***



**Fig. 2. B. II**



## 2. C. I: Teaching Prepositions of Motion

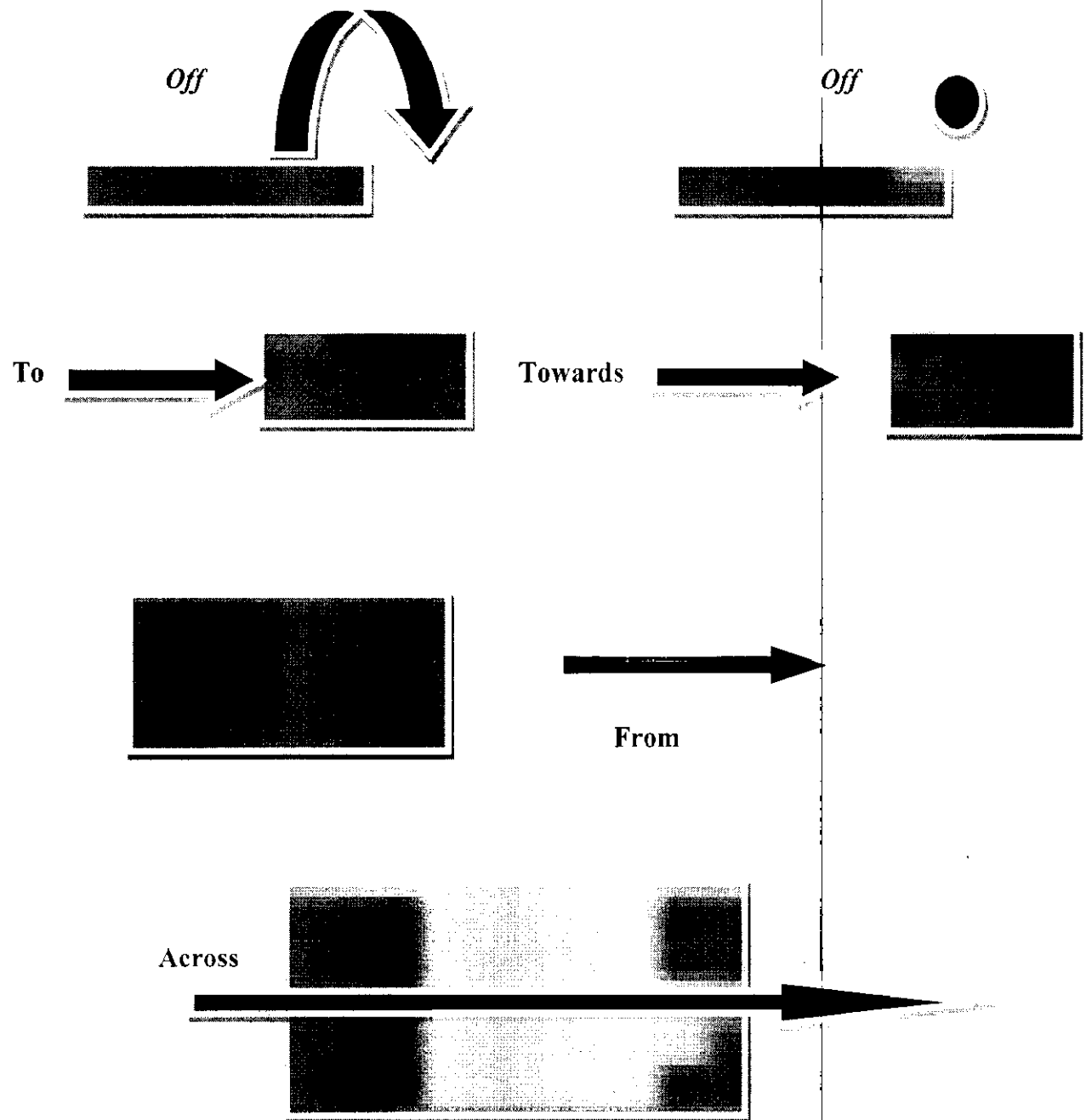
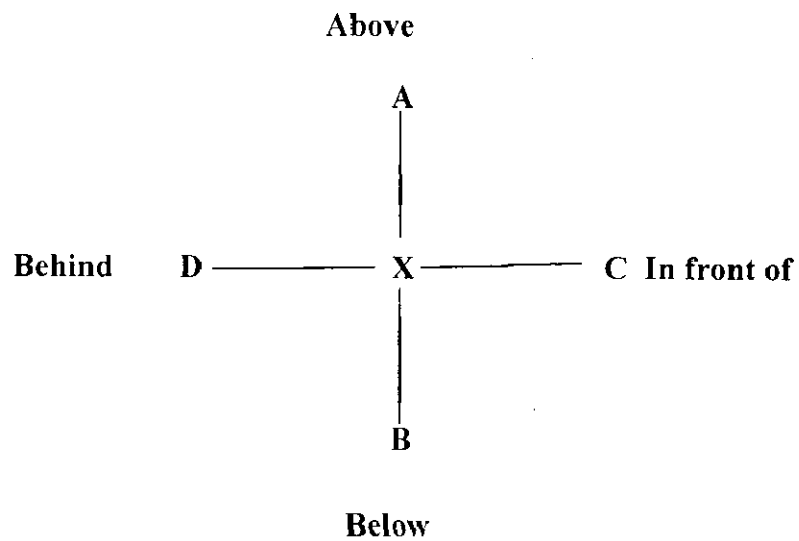
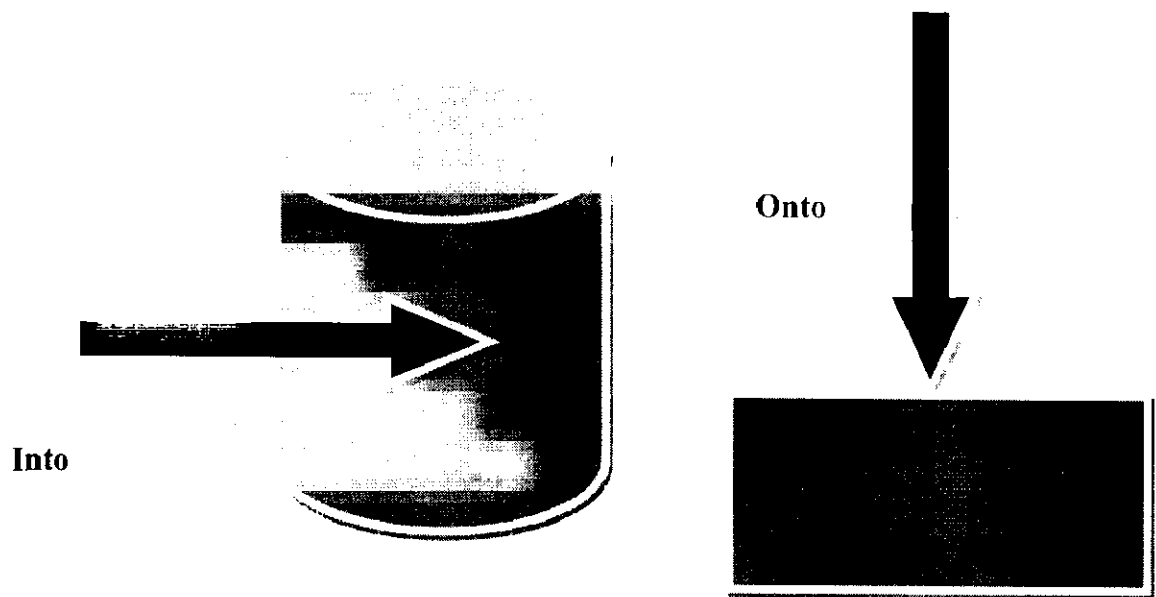


Fig. 2. C. I

## 2. C.II: Teaching Prepositions of Motion



Vertical & Horizontal Direction

Fig. 2. C. II

## 2. D. Practice of Prepositions of Place through pictures



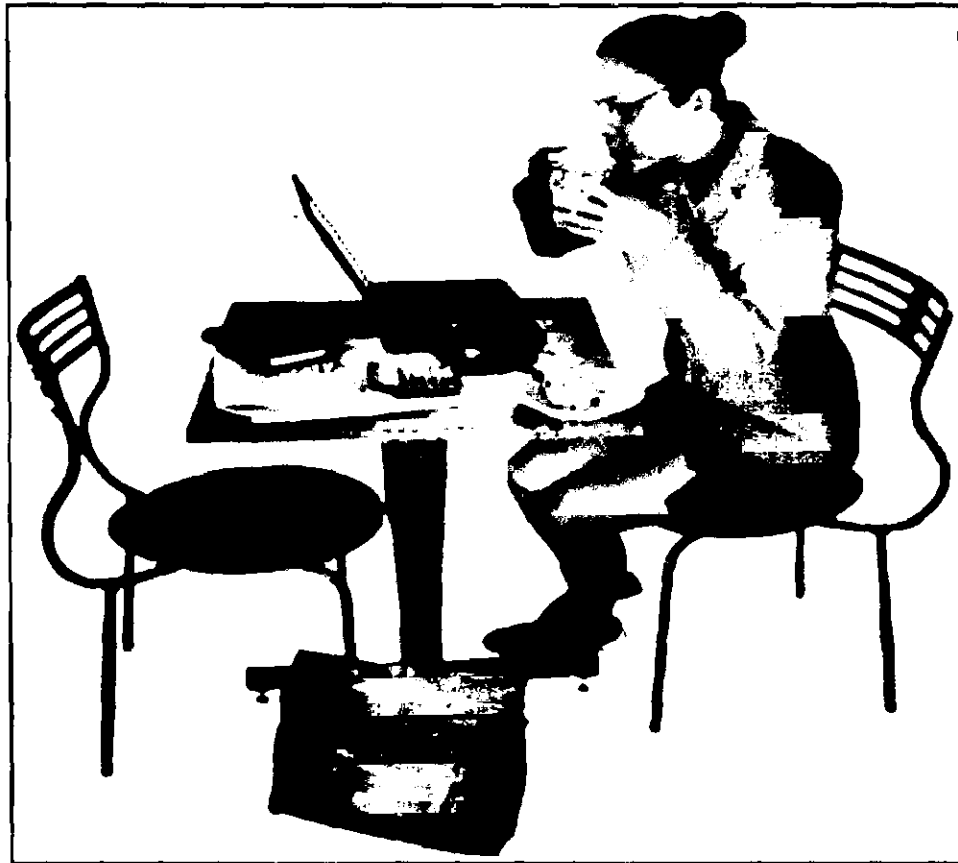
Fig. 2.D. I

### 2. D.I: Complete the exercise according to the picture.

..... the picture, I can see Santa Claus and a girl. Santa is sitting ..... a chair. The girl is standing ..... Santa. Santa and the girl are looking ..... each other. The girl has a present ..... her hands. .... the girl, there is a Christmas tree. There are more presents ..... the tree. Santa's big bag is lying ..... the floor.

**Answers:** in, in, beside, at, in, behind, under, on

Retrieved from: <http://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/grammar/prepositions/exercises>  
?10. Accessed on: 24/02/2015.



**Fig. 2.D. II**

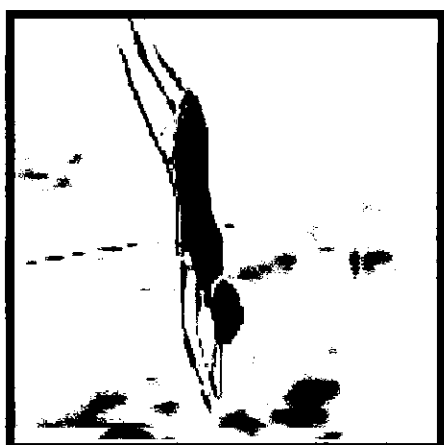
**2. D. II: Complete the exercise according to the picture.**

..... the picture, I can see a woman. The woman is sitting ..... a table. She is sitting ..... a chair. There is another chair \_\_\_\_\_ the woman. Her feet are \_\_\_\_\_ the table. The woman is holding a cup \_\_\_\_\_ her hands. \_\_\_\_\_ the table are a laptop, a paper, a calculator, an appointment calendar, two pens and a muffin. The woman is looking \_\_\_\_\_ her laptop. The woman's bag is \_\_\_\_\_ the table.

**Answers:** in, at, on, opposite, under, in, on, at, under.

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?07. .Accessed on: 24/02/2015.

**2.E.I. Practice of prepositions of motion through pictures –**



1



2



3



4

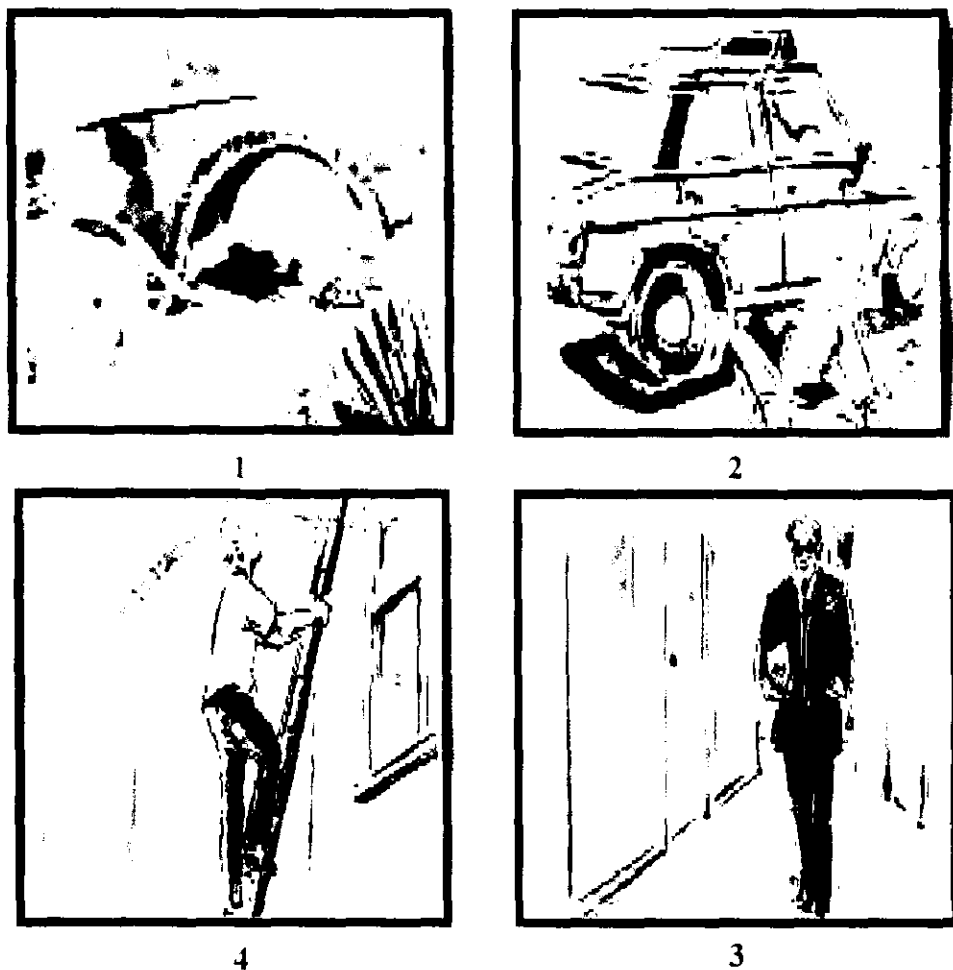
**Fig. 2.E. I**

1. Sarah is diving .....the water.
2. Emma is putting her luggage.....the trolley.
3. Henry is falling ..... the horse.
4. Jessica is sitting ..... Andrew.

(Adapted from Eastwood, J. 1992, p. 283)

**Hints:** in/into, on/onto, off, next to

**2.E.II. Practice of prepositions of motion through pictures –**



**Fig. 2.E. II**

1. There's a bridge .....the river.
2. Tom is .....the car.
3. The boss is coming.....the corridor
4. David is going..... the ladder

(Adapted from Eastwood, J. 1992, p. 283-5)

**Hints:** over, under, from, up.

**2.E.III.** Look at the pictures and write the sentences. Use *in*, *on* or *at* and these words: *the bath*, *the disco*, *the lights*, *the roof*, (p.288)



**Fig. 2.E. III**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

(Adapted from Eastwood, J. 1992, p. 288)

**Hints:** 1. He is on the roof, 2. They are at the disco, 3. He is in the bath, 4. She is at the light.

**2.F.I. Assignment:** Look at the picture and describe it in your own words using prepositions of place –

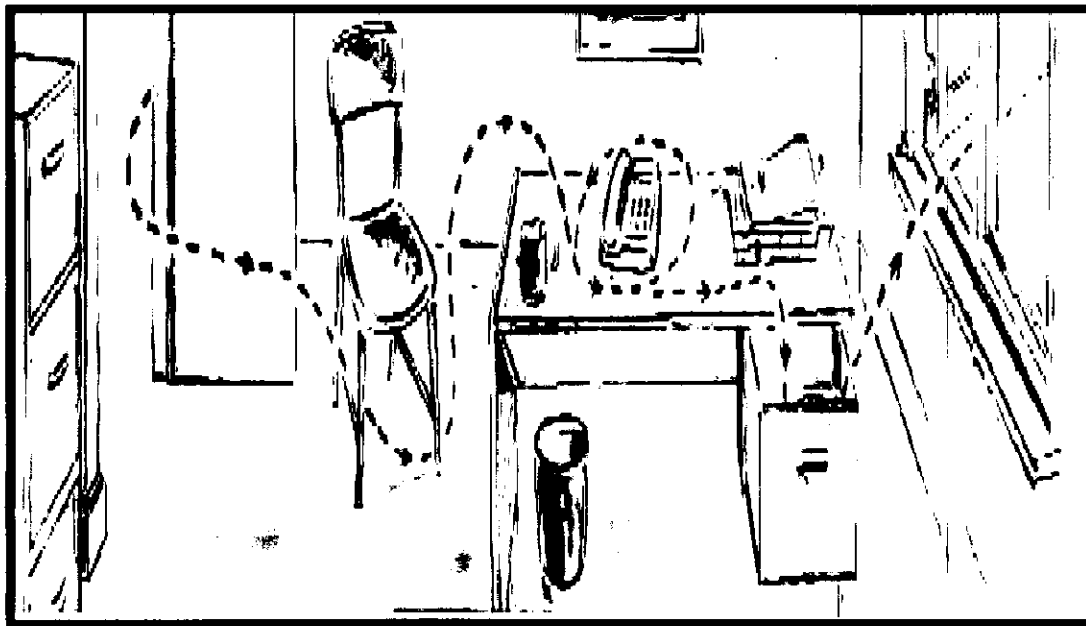


**Fig. 2.F. I: Picture of a Kitchen**

Retrieved from: [http://www.myenglishpages.com/site\\_php\\_files/grammar-exercise-prepositions.php#.VPVbwvmUdqU](http://www.myenglishpages.com/site_php_files/grammar-exercise-prepositions.php#.VPVbwvmUdqU). Accessed on: 3/3/15.



**2.F.II. Assignment:** Where did the fly go? Put in these prepositions: *around, into, on, out of, through, under, up* (p.286)



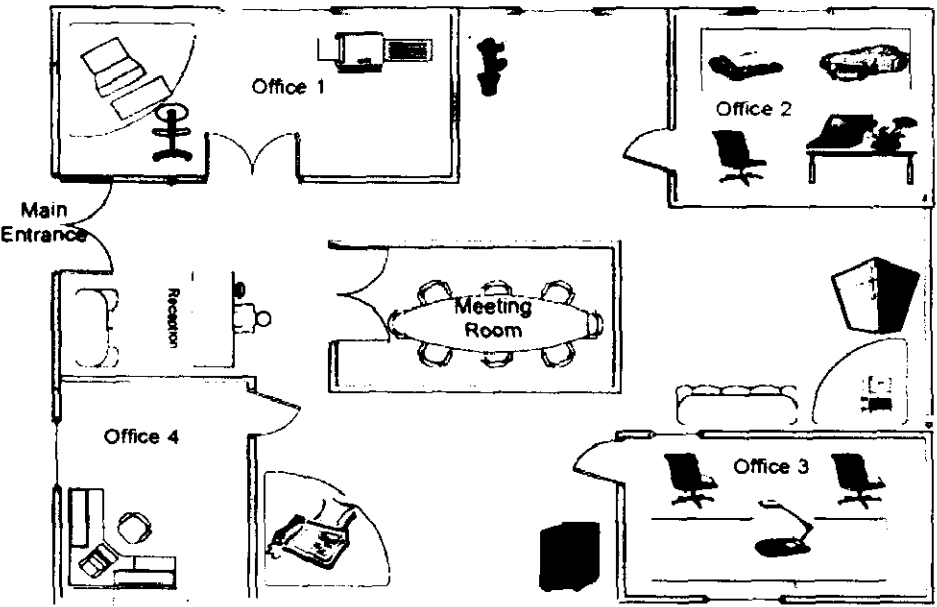
**Fig. 2.F. II**

1. It flew ..... the chair..
2. It crawled ..... the chair leg.
3. It stopped.....the desk for a moment. .
4. It went..... the telephone.
5. It flew.....the drawer.
6. 6 It went..... the window.

(Adapted from Eastwood, J. 1992, p. 286)

**2.F.III. Assignment:** Look at the picture and describe it in your own words using prepositions of place and motion –

**Describing an office**



Write 10 sentences about the office using prepositions.

Example: There is a sofa next to the main entrance.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

**Fig. 2.F. III**

Retrieved from: <http://www.eslflow.com/Describing-an-office-with-prepositions-worksheet.html>. Accessed on: 25/8/14.

**Assignment:** Look at the picture and describe it in your own words using prepositions of place and motion –

eslflow.com

Using Prepositions

5

1

ACM APARTMENTS

Ask questions using the picture above. Try to use as many prepositions in the questions and answers as possible

For example:

A: What can you see in the apartment on the right on the first floor?  
(or) What's happening in the apartment on the right on the first floor?

B: A man is playing guitar in front of a movie poster.

Fig. 2.F. IV

Retrieved from: <http://www.eslflow.com/Building-people-prepositions-lesson.html>.

Accessed on: 25/8/14.

**2.F.V. Assignment:** Look at the picture and describe it in your own words using prepositions of place and motion –

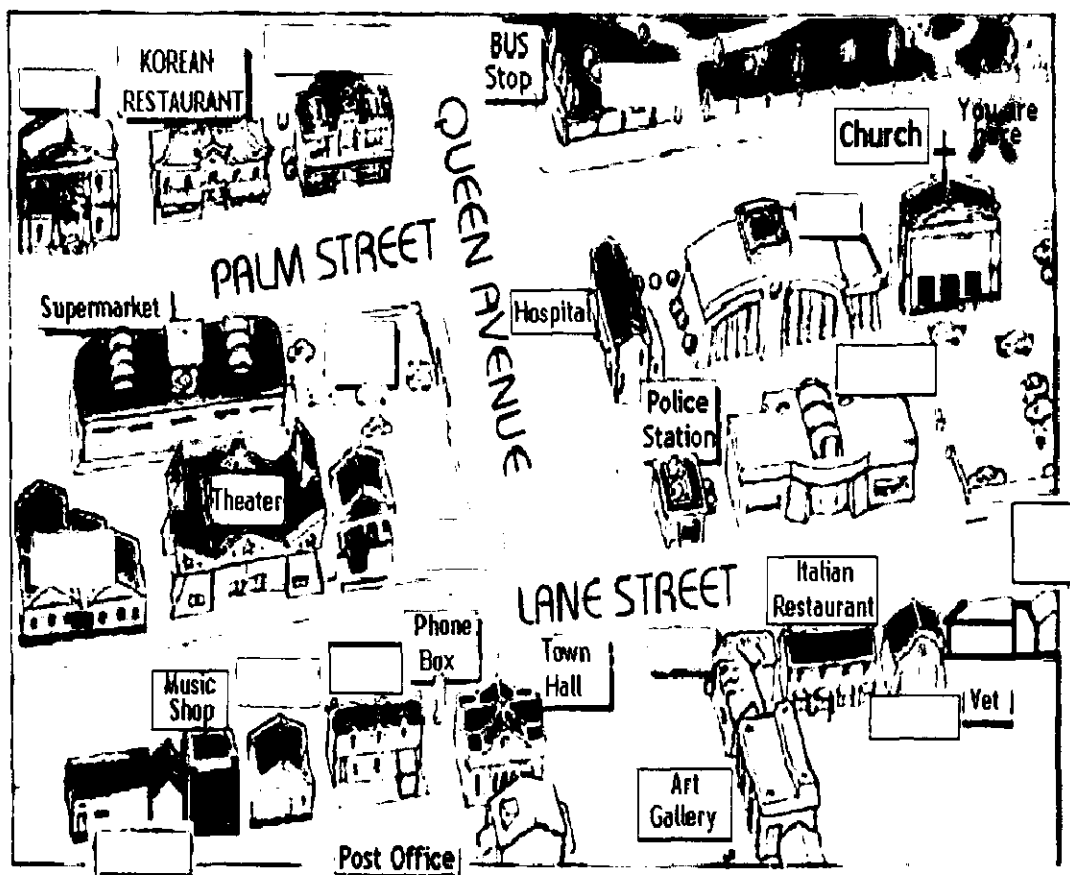


Fig. 2.F. V

i) the aquarium, ii) the pub, iii) the public library, iv) the bank, v) the newsagent, vi) the hotel, vii) the park, viii) the car park, ix) the public toilets, x) the museum, xi) the club, xii) the chemist, xiii) the school, ivx) the shopping center.

**Hints:** Go straight on..... The..... is on your left / right. Go past / across..... Walk / Go along..... Turn left / right. Just before / after the ....., turn left / right

(Adapted from Teach this. com)

**2.G. Exercise in isolated sentences –**

**2.G.I: Fill in the blanks by inserting suitable prepositions in the following sentences –**

1. She learned Russian \_\_\_\_\_ the age of 45.
2. We can only get to the camp \_\_\_\_\_ foot.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ the end of next year we will have made over £ 100,000.
4. She always gets up early \_\_\_\_\_ the morning and goes to bed late \_\_\_\_\_ night.
5. He started learning English \_\_\_\_\_ 2005.
6. We sat down \_\_\_\_\_ the grass and ate our lunch.
7. My parents got married \_\_\_\_\_ the 1970s.
8. There's a good restaurant \_\_\_\_\_ the end of the street.
9. Sonja gets \_\_\_\_\_ the seven o'clock bus in the morning.
10. She always looks \_\_\_\_\_ herself in the mirror.
11. I met Donna \_\_\_\_\_ a party \_\_\_\_\_ Friday night.
12. Daria's books are lying \_\_\_\_\_ the floor.
13. He arrived at the school building just \_\_\_\_\_ time.
14. The audience threw tomatoes \_\_\_\_\_ him.
15. Passengers are not allowed to use cell phones \_\_\_\_\_ airplanes.
16. We had to climb slowly \_\_\_\_\_ the hill.
17. He is always \_\_\_\_\_ time.
18. Her next birthday will be \_\_\_\_\_ a Sunday.
19. The new factory is expected to go online \_\_\_\_\_ May.
20. The TV is \_\_\_\_\_ the corner of the room.

**Answers:** 1. at, 2. on, 3. by, 4. in-at, 5. in, 6. on, 7. in, 8. at, 9. on, 10. at, 11. at-on, 12. on, 13. in, 14. at, 15. on, 16. up, 17. on, 18. on, 19. in, 20. in.

Retrieved from: <http://www.english-grammar.at/worksheets/prepositions/prep1.pdf>.

Accessed on: 26/2/15

**2.G.II: Complete the following paragraph by inserting correct prepositions of place and motion –**

Joe's parents visited him \_\_\_\_\_ college last week. Before their plane landed, it flew \_\_\_\_\_ the campus, and they got a good view of the college from the air. Joe is proud of the college buildings and grounds, and he wanted to show his parents everything. First, they walked \_\_\_\_\_ the campus and looked \_\_\_\_\_ the buildings \_\_\_\_\_ the outside, and then Joe took them \_\_\_\_\_ his dormitory, the library, and the science building. They went \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the halls of the science building, looking into the classrooms. After that, they went \_\_\_\_\_ the athletic field. They went \_\_\_\_\_ the stadium \_\_\_\_\_ the main entrance. Joe's father, who had played football \_\_\_\_\_ college, jumped \_\_\_\_\_ over a low wall \_\_\_\_\_ the seats and the playing field. He said that going \_\_\_\_\_ the field made him feel like a young man again. They went \_\_\_\_\_ the campus to have dinner, and after dinner they strolled \_\_\_\_\_ the streets of the quiet little college town until bedtime.

(Adapted from Macmillan 1964, p. 30)

**Answers:** at, over, around, at, from, through, up, down, across, into, at, in, over, between, onto, off, about.

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## Appendix IV: Survey Questionnaire

### General Instruction

*Dear Students,*

The objective of the present questionnaire is to assess the frequency of errors pertaining to the English articles and prepositions. The participants are requested to response merely on the basis of the questions given in the questionnaire. This researcher will be grateful for your response to this questionnaire. The information given in the questionnaire will be used only for researcher purpose and will be kept confidential.

Thanks for your cooperation.

#### **Personal Information**

**Name** : \_\_\_\_\_

**Class** : \_\_\_\_\_

**Year** : \_\_\_\_\_

**Main Subject** : \_\_\_\_\_

#### **IV- I Section First (Q 1-11)**

##### **Participants Social and Linguistic Background Questions**

The first section of the questionnaire deals with the participants' linguistic and social background. It consists of 11 questions which are divided into two parts. The first part of this section deals with the personal information of the respondents. It comprises 7 questions which deal with the age, gender, origin, mother tongue of the students, medium of instruction at the intermediate class and the respondents' starting age of learning English. Second part of this section (consists of 4 questions) deals with the participants' views regarding their proficiency, interest and eager to acquire English.

1. **Gender:**      A) Male .....                      B) Female .....
2. **Age:** .....



3. **Origin:**      A) Rural .....      B)Urban .....
4. **Mother Tongue:**  
A) Hindi .....      B) Urdu .....  
C) English .....      D) Any Other .....
5. **What was the medium of instruction at your school?**  
A) Hindi .....      B) Urdu .....  
C) English .....      D) Any other .....
6. **Are you interested in learning English?**  
A) Yes .....      B) No .....
7. **At what age did you start learning English?**  
A) 2-7yrs.....      B)7-12yrs.....  
B) 12-17yrs .....      D) 17and above.....
8. **Do you find the English Grammar classes interesting?**  
A)Yes .....      B) No .....
9. **Why do you want to learn English?**  
A) To obtain a good job .....  
B) To satisfy personal interest.....  
C)To improve the social status .....  
D) To promote business.....  
E) Some other reason.....
10. **Do you think Grammar is important for learning English?**  
A) Yes .....      B) No .....
11. **Do you think your command over Grammar can help you improve your communication skills in English?**  
A) Yes .....      B)No .....

#### **IV-II Section Second (Q 1-20) Articles Test**

Section two consists of thirty Questions (Section 2, Item no. 1-30). This section is further divided into two parts: A & B. (Part A, Item no. 1-20) comprises twenty items with twenty blanks and the participants were asked to insert “*a*”, “*an*”, “*the*”, or “*Ø*”, where needed; and (Part B, Item no. 21-30) comprises ten items with or without the definite article “*the*”.

#### **PART “A”**

**Insert Articles (a), (an), (the) or ‘O’ (where article is not required) in the following sentences.**

1. I bought ..... new car yesterday.
2. .... Car is blue.
3. .... Virtue is its own reward.
4. In ..... urban area I saw a one-eyed man.
5. Do not make ..... noise.
6. He is ..... honest person.
7. Iqbal was a poet and ..... philosopher.
8. He is ..... smart boy.
9. ....World is a stage where the director is God.
10. Ceylon is ..... Island.
11. .... Iron is a useful metal.
12. Bombay is ..... biggest city of India.
13. .... Man is mortal.
14. What ..... beautiful scene this is!
15. ....Calcium is useful for the bones.
16. .... Ramayana is a famous epic.
17. John goes to ..... School daily.
18. .... Book you want is out of print.
19. .... Intelligence is difficult to measure.
20. His father is ..... veterinarian.

## PART "B"

Choose the most appropriate option given in the bracket, with or without the Definite Article.

21. Last year I visited Mexico and -----  
A) The United States                      B) United States
22. One of my aims is to contribute to ----- in some ways.  
A) The society    B) Society
23. Jill plays ----- in the corner of the room.  
A) The violin B) Violin
24. ----- are available nowadays.  
A) Computers    B) The computers
25. John went to ----- to see his uncle.  
A) The hospital    B) Hospital
26. It is not easy to be fluent in -----.  
A) The English                      B) English
27. ----- of smoking is common here.  
A) The habit                      B) Habit
28. Do you like to go to -----?  
A) The Cinema                      B) Cinema
29. ----- is one of the peaks of the Himalayas.  
A) The Mount Everest                      B) Mount Everest
30. River Volga flows into -----.  
A) The Caspian Sea                      B) Caspian Sea

#### **IV- III. Section Three (Q 1-25) Prepositions Test**

The third section of the questionnaire consists of 25 Multiple Choice Items with prepositions of time, place, and motion. The respondents were provided the questions with correct or incorrect alternatives of responses and the students were asked to fill the correct preposition from the given alternatives.

**Fill in blanks with suitable Prepositions of Time, Place, and Motion, given in the bracket in the following sentences.**

- 1. They got to New York ..... night**
  - A) On
  - B) At
  - C) In
  - D) None of the above
- 2. I saw her ..... last Sunday evening**
  - A) On
  - B) In
  - C) At
  - D) None of the above
- 3. He has lived in the U.S. .... 1962**
  - A) For
  - B) Since
  - C) From
  - D) During
- 4. This treaty was signed ..... November 2, 1962**
  - A) In
  - B) On
  - C) At
  - D) None of the above
- 5. We stayed there ..... all week**
  - A) Since
  - B) For
  - C) In
  - D) None of the above

6. The English class begins ..... 8 o'clock
- A) From
  - B) At
  - C) On
  - D) None of the above
7. We will be in Eugene ..... tonight
- A) In
  - B) On
  - C) At
  - D) None of the above
8. He never comes to class ..... time
- A) In
  - B) On
  - C) At
  - D) None of the above
9. They live ..... 140 David Street
- A) At
  - B) In
  - C) On
  - D) None of the above
10. George usually goes to work ..... the bus, but sometimes he goes in his car
- A) By
  - B) On
  - C) In
  - D) None of the above
11. The book is ..... the desk
- A) At
  - B) On
  - C) In
  - D) None of the above

12. **Meet me ..... the bus stop**  
A) In  
B) At  
C) On  
D) None of the above
13. **He slipped ..... the motor cycle.**  
A) Off  
B) From  
C) Onto  
D) None of the above
14. **Please pick the newspaper up .....the floor**  
A) Off  
B) From  
C) On  
D) None of the above
15. **John was sleeping ..... his armed chair**  
A) In  
B) On  
C) At  
D) None of the above
16. **They are sitting ..... the table to eat dinner**  
A) In  
B) At  
C) On  
D) None of the above
17. **The air plane flew ..... the city**  
A) Over  
B) Above  
C) Below  
D) None of the above

**18. We entered ..... the room**

- A) Into
- B) To
- C) In
- D) None of the above

**19. We got ..... the car**

- A) In
- B) Into
- C) On
- D) None of the above

**20. The boy fell ..... the well**

- A) In
- B) Into
- C) Onto
- D) None of the above

**21. He walked ..... the room and slammed the door**

- A) In
- B) Into
- C) Onto
- D) None of the above

**22. They went ..... the school**

- A) To
- B) At
- C) In
- D) None of the above

**23. When I reached ..... my classroom**

- A) Into
- B) At
- C) To
- D) None of the above

- 24. John went ..... home**
- A) To
  - B) At
  - C) In
  - D) None of the above
- 25. She will arrive ..... Spain on Monday**
- A) At
  - B) In
  - C) To
  - D) None of the above



## Appendix V-A: Samples of Compositions

B. Write a short paragraph in not more than 150 words (15 lines) describing your First Day at the University (AMU). You can take help of the following Verbal Inputs:  
Name and location of University, Buildings, Classrooms, Library, Playground, Students, Friends and Teachers.

The Aligarh Muslim University placed at the Aligarh. The Aligarh Muslim University is the very famous in the India. The location of the Aligarh Muslim University is 3<sup>rd</sup> in the India. The buildings of the Aligarh Muslim University is very strong and placed at the very large area. In the Aligarh Muslim University there are many classrooms available for the preparation of the classes. The position of library of the Aligarh Muslim University is 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Asia. The library is divided in the three floors such as ground floor, first floor and second floor. The playground of AMU is made in the very large area. The students of the AMU Aligarh is the very intelligent and honourable. My friends in AMU are very large no. and the teachers of AMU are very intelligent.

Unnecess-  
ary article

Omission  
of Verb

Preposition

Unnec-  
essary  
article

Preposition

Wrong  
Usage

Article  
Omission

Wrong  
Verb

Name and location of University, Buildings, Classrooms, Library, Playground, Students, Friends and Teachers. (15 mins)

Unauthenticated  
preprint

omission 2  
proposition

Kense

When necessary  
/ prepare

*Unnecessary article*

Misses 2  
proportion

mesin  
prepo-  
sisi

9. course  
preparation

Unnecessary  
preparation

B. Write a short paragraph in not more than 150 words (15 lines) describing your First Day at the University (AMU). You can take help of the following Verbal Inputs:  
Name and location of University, Buildings, Classrooms, Library, Playground, Students, Friends and Teachers. (15 mins)

My university name is Aligarh Muslim University. It is located near Lal Diggi at Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh.

AMU is a tallest university as compared to other buildings in Aligarh.

I join this university at the age of 7 in Abdullah school which is located near the Harris Road at Aligarh in U.P.

In my school there are 250 classrooms, two libraries, 1 playground, 2500 students, 300 teachers and many more.

I really like my school because the environment which I got a support. I do a lot especially in study.

I have 4 friends and they are really sweet and nice person. The first day of my school was not too good because here

not I have no friends and all are unknown for me. But after some weeks, I got new guys

who really cares me and support me on difficult problems. Therefore I feel that humanity is the

I reason at school which is found and taught as well.

Wrong Article

No need

Wrong word  
Order  
Missing  
Preposition

Wrong word

Redundant Article

Tense Verb

Spelling  
Wrong word  
organization

Wrong Preposition

Preposition  
Omission

Tense

Wrong usage

Wrong preposition

B. Write a short paragraph in not more than 150 words (15 lines) describing your First Day at the University (AMU). You can take help of the following Verbal Inputs:

Name and location of University, Buildings, Classrooms, Library, Playground, Students, Friends and Teachers. (15 mins)

That was a great day of my life when I came in this University. It was my dream to come AMU & study here. When I took admission, this dream was full filled. 1st day when I came in AMU I saw the a big door, that was Bab-a syed and after that saw many buildings of this university. After taking admission when I came to attend my 1st class, I met my some of my classmates in which this time some are my best friends. The first class attended in Botany Department 2 after attending class I saw the AMU library. After the ground after. All of the things that I have seen in first day of my AMU. The first morning Azad Library was the best in all of them.

Misuse word

Misuse of preposition

Wrong word

Wrong Verb

Redundant preposition  
Redundant Article

Redundant preposition

missing  
Article

Spelling

tense

wrong  
preposition

Article

tense

B. Write a short paragraph in not more than 150 words (15 lines) describing your First Day at the University (AMU). You can take help of the following Verbal Inputs:  
Name and location of University, Buildings, Classrooms, Library, Playground, Students, Friends and Teachers.  
(15 mins)

missing  
Article

wrong  
word  
order

Redundant  
article

Spelling

when I came to university Aligarh Muslim University  
Aligarh than I saw that women's college is a  
very large campus. and whole university is very  
big campus. I got my admission in fine Arts.  
I don't know that where is admission  
section. I stand there and there for a  
day. I am some time I got did not get  
the hostel. I live in private hotel. I did  
not know any person. I need to help.  
But nobody help me. When I was  
puzzled But my teachers suggest me  
don't become nervous. After passing  
some time many students became my  
friends. The university of our university  
is very big and facilitated. The playground  
of our college very facilitated and complet  
with many enjoyfull play tools.

## Appendix V-B: Samples of Questionnaire Containing Errors

### SECTION-(2) :- ARTICLES

#### PART "A"

A. Insert Articles (a), (an), (the) or 'O' (where article is not required) in the following sentences. (20 mins)

1. I bought the new car yesterday.
2. a Car is blue.
3. an Virtue is its own reward.
4. In a urban area I saw a one-eyed man.
5. Do not make a noise.
6. He is the honest person.
7. Iqbal was a poet and O philosopher.
8. He is a smart boy.
9. O World is a stage where the director is God.
10. Ceylon is a Island.
11. an Iron is a useful metal.
12. Bombay is O biggest city of India.
13. the Man is mortal.
14. What the beautiful scene this is!
15. the Calcium is useful for the bones.
16. O Ramayana is a famous epic.
17. John goes to O School daily.
18. a Book you want is out of print.
19. an Intelligence is difficult to measure.
20. His father is a veterinarian.

P.T.O.

## PART "B"

B. Choose the most appropriate option given in the bracket, with or without the Definite Article.

21. Last year I visited Mexico and \_\_\_\_\_ (The United States/ United States)
22. One of my aims is to contribute to \_\_\_\_\_ (The society/ society) in some ways.
23. Jill plays \_\_\_\_\_ in the corner of the room. (The violin /violin).
24. (Computers/ The computers) \_\_\_\_\_ are available nowadays.
25. John went to \_\_\_\_\_ to see his uncle (The hospital/ hospital).
26. It is not easy to be fluent in \_\_\_\_\_ (The English/ English).
27. (The habit/ habit) \_\_\_\_\_ of smoking is common here.
28. Do you like to go to \_\_\_\_\_ (The Cinema/ Cinema)?
29. \_\_\_\_\_ (The Mount Everest/ Mount Everest) is one of the peaks of the Himalayas.
30. River Volga flows into \_\_\_\_\_ (The Caspian Sea/ Caspian Sea).

## SECTION - (3):- PREPOSITIONS

C. Fill in blanks with suitable Prepositions of Time, Place, and Motion, given in the bracket in the following sentences.

(20 mins)

1. They got to New York on night. (on, at, in, none)
2. I saw her in last Sunday evening. (on, in, at, none)
3. He has lived in the U.S. from 1962. (for, since, from, during)
4. This treaty was signed on November 2, 1962. (in, on, at, none)
5. We stayed there for all week. (since, for, in, none)
6. The English class begins none 8 o'clock. (from, at, on, none)
7. We will be in Eugene on tonight. (in, on, at, none)
8. He never comes to class at time. (in, on, at, none)

P.T.O.

9. They live at 140 David Street. (at, in, on, none)
10. George usually goes to work by the bus, but sometimes he goes in his car.  
(by, on, in, none)
11. The book is on the desk. (at, on, in, none)
12. Meet me on the bus stop. (in, at, on, none)
13. He slipped onto the motor cycle. (off, from, onto, none)
14. Please pick the newspaper up on the floor. (off, from, on, none)
15. John was sleeping at his arm chair. (in, on, at, none)
16. They are sitting on the table to eat dinner. (in, at, on, none)
17. The air plane flew below the city. (over, above, below, none)
18. We entered in the room. (into, to, in, none)
19. We got none the car. (in, into, on, none)
20. The boy fell into the well. (in, into, onto, none)
21. He walked in the room and slammed the door. (in, into, onto, none)
22. They went to the school. (to, at, on, none)
23. When I reached none my classroom. (into, at, to, none)
24. John went at home. (to, at, in, none)
25. She will arrive in Spain on Monday. (at, in, on, to)

P.T.O.



**SECTION-(2) :- ARTICLES**

**PART "A"**

**A. Insert Articles (a), (an), (the) or 'O' (where article is not required) in the following sentences.** **(20 mins)**

1. I bought a new car yesterday. 2. A Car is blue.
3. The Virtue is its own reward.
4. In a urban area I saw a one-eyed man.
5. Do not make a noise.
6. He is a honest person.
7. Iqbal was a poet and the philosopher.
8. He is a smart boy.
9. A World is a stage where the director is God.
10. Ceylon is the Island.
11. O Iron is a useful metal.
12. Bombay is a biggest city of India.
13. O Man is mortal.
14. What a beautiful scene this is!
15. The Calcium is useful for the bones.
16. O Ramayana is a famous epic.
17. John goes to the School daily.
18. a Book you want is out of print.
19. An Intelligence is difficult to measure.
20. His father is a veterinarian.

P.T.O.

**PART "B"**

**B. Choose the most appropriate option given in the bracket, with or without the Definite Article.**

21. Last year I visited Mexico and \_\_\_\_\_ (The United States/United States) ✓  
22. One of my aims is to contribute to \_\_\_\_\_ (The society / society) in some ways. ✓  
23. Jill plays \_\_\_\_\_ in the corner of the room. (The violin /violin). ✓  
24. (Computers The computers) \_\_\_\_\_ are available nowadays. ✓  
25. John went to \_\_\_\_\_ to see his uncle (The hospital/hospital). ✓  
26. It is not easy to be fluent in \_\_\_\_\_ (The English/English). ✓  
27. (The habit/habit) \_\_\_\_\_ of smoking is common here. ✓  
28. Do you like to go to \_\_\_\_\_ (The Cinema/ Cinema)? ✓  
29. \_\_\_\_\_ (The Mount Everest Mount Everest) is one of the peaks of the Himalayas. ✓  
30. River Volga flows into \_\_\_\_\_ (The Caspian Sea/ Caspian Sea). ✓

**SECTION – (3):- PREPOSITIONS**

**C. Fill in blanks with suitable Prepositions of Time, Place, and Motion, given in the bracket in the following sentences.** (20 mins)

1. They got to New York in night. (on, at, in, none)  
2. I saw her on last Sunday evening. (on, in, at, none)  
3. He has lived in the U.S. from 1962. (for, since, from, during)  
4. This treaty was signed on November 2, 1962. (in, on, at, none)  
5. We stayed there since all week. (since, for, in, none)  
6. The English class begins at 8 o'clock. (from, at, on, none)  
7. We will be in Eugene at tonight. (in, on, at, none)  
8. He never comes to class in time. (in, on, at, none)

P.T.O.

9. They live None 40 David Street. (at, in, on, none)
10. George usually goes to work in the bus, but sometimes he goes in his car.  
(by, on, in, none)
11. The book is in the desk. (at, on, in, none)
12. Meet me in the bus stop. (in, at, on, none)
13. He slipped from the motor cycle. (off, from, onto, none)
14. Please pick the newspaper up from the floor. (off, from, on, none)
15. John was sleeping on his armed chair. (in, on, at, none)
16. They are sitting in the table to eat dinner. (in, at, on, none)
17. The air plane flew Above the city. (over, above, below, none)
18. We entered None the room. (into, to, in, none)
19. We got in the car. (in, into, on, none)
20. The boy fell onto the well. (in, into, onto, none)
21. He walked into the room and slammed the door. (in, into, onto, none)
22. They went on the school. (to, at, on, none)
23. When I reached at my classroom. (into, at, to, none)
24. John went to home. (to, at, in, none)
25. She will arrive on Spain on Monday. (at, in, on, to)

P.T.O.

**SECTION-(2) :- ARTICLES**

**PART "A"**

**A. Insert Articles (a), (an), (the) or 'O' (where article is not required) in the following sentences. (20 mins)**

1. I bought a new car yesterday.
2. An Car is blue.
3. The Virtue is its own reward.
4. In a urban area I saw a one-eyed man.
5. Do not make an noise.
6. He is an honest person.
7. Iqbal was a poet and O philosopher.
8. He is the smart boy.
9. The World is a stage where the director is God.
10. Ceylon is a Island.
11. An Iron is a useful metal.
12. Bombay is a biggest city of India.
13. An Man is mortal.
14. What a beautiful scene this is!
15. The Calcium is useful for the bones.
16. A Ramayana is a famous epic.
17. John goes to the School daily.
18. The Book you want is out of print.
19. An Intelligence is difficult to measure.
20. His father is the veterinarian.

P.T.O.

**PART "B"**

**B. Choose the most appropriate option given in the bracket, with or without the Definite Article.**

21. Last year I visited Mexico and \_\_\_\_\_ (The United States/United States) ✓  
22. One of my aims is to contribute to \_\_\_\_\_ (The society / society) in some ways. ✓  
23. Jill plays \_\_\_\_\_ in the corner of the room. (The violin/violin) ✓  
24. (Computers/ The computers) \_\_\_\_\_ are available nowadays. ✓  
25. John went to \_\_\_\_\_ to see his uncle (The hospital/hospital) ✓  
26. It is not easy to be fluent in \_\_\_\_\_ (The English/English) ✓  
27. (The habit/ habit) \_\_\_\_\_ of smoking is common here. ✓  
28. Do you like to go to \_\_\_\_\_ (The Cinema/ Cinema)? ✓  
29. \_\_\_\_\_ (The Mount Everest/Mount Everest) is one of the peaks of the Himalayas. ✓  
30. River Volga flows into \_\_\_\_\_ (The Caspian Sea/Caspian Sea). ✓

**SECTION - (3):- PREPOSITIONS**

**C. Fill in blanks with suitable Prepositions of Time, Place, and Motion, given in the bracket in the following sentences.**

**(20 mins)**

1. They got to New York none night. (on, at, in, none)  
2. I saw her at last Sunday evening. (on, in, at, none)  
3. He has lived in the U.S. during 1962. (for, since, from, during)  
4. This treaty was signed at November 2, 1962. (in, on, at, none)  
5. We stayed there for all week. (since, for, in, none)  
6. The English class begins from 8 o'clock. (from, at, on, none)  
7. We will be in Eugene on tonight. (in, on, at, none)  
8. He never comes to class at time. (in, on, at, none)

**P.T.O.**

9. They live at 140 David Street. (at, in, on, none)
10. George usually goes to work on the bus, but sometimes he goes in his car.  
(by, on, in, none)
11. The book is in the desk. (at, on, in, none)
12. Meet me none the bus stop. (in, at, on, none)
13. He slipped off the motor cycle. (off, from, onto, none)
14. Please pick the newspaper up on the floor. (off, from, on, none)
15. John was sleeping in his armed chair. (in, on, at, none)
16. They are sitting on the table to eat dinner. (in, at, on, none)
17. The air plane flew over the city. (over, above, below, none)
18. We entered into the room. (into, to, in, none)
19. We got onto the car. (in, into, on, none)
20. The boy fell in the well. (in, into, onto, none)
21. He walked onto the room and slammed the door. (in, into, onto, none)
22. They went at the school. (to, at, on, none)
23. When I reached into my classroom. (into, at, to, none)
24. John went at home. (to, at, in, none)
25. She will arrive to Spain on Monday. (at, in, on, to)

P.T.O.